



# THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Mainly dry

(IR65p) 60p

## How to kiss Felicity Kendal every night: Michael Pennington

the long weekend



## Live and kicking: Janet Street-Porter

The eye

## Georgia weighs in to make one woman's day



Georgia Tennant, born yesterday at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, weighing 3.75kg, begins her first full day of life on International Women's Day - a celebration of what women have achieved, writes Kate Watson-Smyth.

But as she lies unaware of the world around her, mil-

lions of women are reminding themselves of their strength and remembering what they have achieved since the dark days of non-suffrage and inequality.

They will celebrate the meaning of womanhood so that one day Georgia too will be able to take her place

in the world as an equal member of society. Mao Tse-tung said that women hold up half the sky. Many would say they keep the world turning as well. Today is a festival where they will pledge to continue fighting for themselves and their children.

Photograph: Brian Harris

## Row over hospital killer bug

Anthony Bevins and Paul Routledge

Ministers were last night accused of taking a cavalier attitude to public health after it was revealed that there has been a tenfold increase in the number of hospital patients contracting a potential killer bug.

John Horgan, minister for Health said in a Commons reply that the total number of cases of methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) was not "collected centrally", and the Ministry had no idea of the number of cases in which the bug "contributed to or caused death".

He told Andrew MacKinlay, Labour MP for Thurrock, that 177 English hospitals had "voluntarily" reported 19,385 patients affected by MRSA last year - up from 2,286 patients in 1992.

But Chris Smith, Labour's health spokesman, told *The Independent* last night: "The fact that the Government has no idea how many cases of this occur nationally is another example of their disregard for public health. You go into hospital to get better, not to get ill."

In a speech to the Scottish Labour Party conference in Inverness yesterday, Tony Blair said: "This is a government in a state of decay, utterly incapable of providing leadership or competence in the administration of the country's affairs."

Labour plans to set up a consumer-oriented Food Standards Agency, reporting directly both to the Department of Health and what remains of the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food. But with four elderly people admitted to hospital yesterday, after drinking water contaminated with the microscopic parasite cryptosporidium, Commons answers on the MRSA epidemic showed that the nation's health problems go far wider than food and drink.

The official Public Health Laboratory Service told *The Independent* yes-

terday that while it had partial figures on MRSA cases, "death data is not available. Patients infected with MRSA are usually very ill anyway," the laboratory said. "They may die with MRSA, but not of it." That view appeared to clash with the statement made by the minister, Mr Horgan, who told Mr MacKinlay yesterday: "It is not known in how many cases MRSA contributed to or caused death."

Professor Brian Austen, of the Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, currently engaged in the early stages of developing a drug to counter MRSA, said: "People are being infected, and they are dying. If they do not have the figures on that, then alarm bells should be ringing."

He said that Whitehall's response was worrying. "MRSA can give rise to serious disease and can lead to death."

It is usually associated with hospitals and weaker members of the community, but under the current scenario, people are going into hospital without it, and they are coming out with it."

The severity of the bug is shown by the action taken when some hospitals have been hit by it. Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces minister, told Mr MacKinlay this week that in one incident at the Cambridge Military Hospital in 1994, there had been a "widespread infection" of MRSA, all admissions had been stopped for more than a week, all staff had been screened and treated with antibiotics.

A Ministry of Health working party report said in 1995 that MRSA "now affects more than 50 hospitals per month".

Mr MacKinlay told *The Independent* that the Minister's attitude was "outrageous". He said that the Government did not even appear to have set up a mandatory screening for all patients going into hospitals. "My fear is... it will have budgetary implications for the National Health Service unless something is done soon, and thoroughly."

## Peking hit by rush-hour bus blast

Teresa Poole  
Peking

An explosion on a bus in one of Peking's major shopping streets during last night's rush hour injured and possibly killed a number of people. Reuters news agency said two people were killed. Police refused to say whether they were investigating a bomb, but the blast came just 10 days after three bombs were planted on buses in the far western province of Xinjiang, where Muslim separatists have been blamed by the Chinese for a series of attacks over the past year.

By the early hours of this morning, there was still a very heavy police presence on Xidan Street, where debris from the bus could be seen outside one of the big shopping malls. Workers at the Jishuwan Hospital said some of the eight injured had burns all over their bodies.

Terrorist attacks in China, or at least those that come to light, are rare. So if Uighur Muslim separatists have started a bombing campaign in China's capital city, the loopholes in China's security system will not become apparent, over the death of Deng Xiaoping. Explosives are easy to come by in a country where there are many private mines and controls can be very lax.

## 9,000 years on, Cheddar Man meets the relatives

Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

Adrian Targett visited the home of a close relative yesterday. He had to put on Wellington boots because the floor is muddy. The relative wasn't in. Hardly surprising: he died 9,000 years ago.

But there's no doubt Mr Targett, a 42-year-old history teacher in Cheddar, Somerset, has been shown by DNA tests to be a direct descendant, by his mother's line, of "Cheddar Man", the oldest complete skeleton ever found in Britain, and now also the world's most distant confirmed relative.

Even the Royal Family can only trace its heritage back to King Egbert, who ruled from 829AD to 839AD. By contrast, Cheddar Man, a hunter-gatherer who predated the arrival of farming, lived in 7,150BC.

The news caught everyone by surprise. Mr Targett's wife, Catherine, said: "This is all a bit of a surprise, but maybe this explains why he likes his steaks rare".

The discovery came about during tests performed as part of a TV series on archaeology in Somerset, *Once Upon a Time in the West*, to be shown later this year. DNA found in the pulp cavity of one of Cheddar Man's molar teeth was tested at Ox-



The generation game: Adrian Targett (above right), and as a baby with his mother, right) has been shown by DNA tests to be descended from Cheddar Man (left)



Photographs: SWN

ford University's Institute of Molecular Medicine, and then compared with that of 20 people locally, whose families were known to have been living in the area for some generations.

To make up the numbers, Mr

Targett, an only child who has no children, joined in. But the match was unequivocal: the two men have a common maternal ancestor. The mitochondrial DNA, which is inherited from the egg, con-

firmed it. "I'm absolutely overwhelmed," said Mr Targett, on hearing of the match. "It is very strange news to receive - I'm not sure how I feel at the moment."

His pupils were delighted

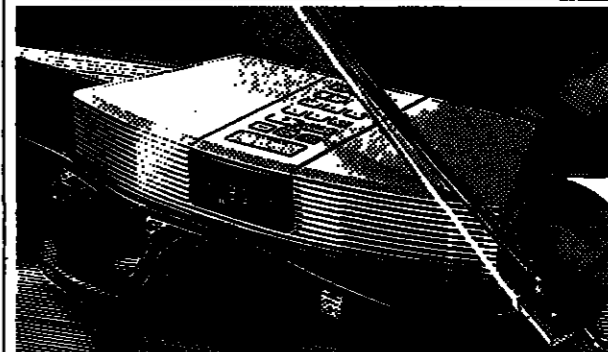
("He has never had a nickname... until now," said one 16-year-old with relish) and so are scientists. The finding could provide a key to the debate about the process by which early humans settled down to an agricultural life.

Cheddar Man was discovered in 1903, 20 metres inside Gough's Cave, which is the largest of 100 caverns in Cheddar Gorge - Britain's prime site for Palaeolithic human remains. He had been buried alone in a chamber near the mouth of a deep cave, about 1,000 years before hunter-gathering began to give way to farming.

At the site, Mr Targett said: "I'm glad I don't live down here - it's very dark, dank and dismal. I have been down here before but I never dreamed I was in my ancestor's home."

Dr Larry Barham, an archaeology lecturer at Bristol University, said: "There is debate over whether farmers arrived from Eastern Europe and ousted hunter-gatherers - or whether the idea of farming spread through the population. This discovery strongly suggests an element of the second."

Physically, Cheddar Man would have looked like modern man. "You could put a suit on him and he wouldn't look out of place in an office," Dr Barham added.



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TV & Radio ...31-32  
Weather ...31

Care failure  
A schizophrenic who killed his  
stepfather and left his mother  
for dead had been failed by care  
professionals in a "fundamen-

tal and depressing" way according to one of the most  
damning reports ever produced  
by an inquiry into a care-in-the-  
community killing. Page 8

حکذا من الاصل

## news

## significant shorts

## Hunt goes on for thief who stole Picasso at gunpoint

The hunt continued yesterday for the armed robber, described by police as "audacious and dangerous", who stole a £600,000 Picasso painting from a central London gallery.

Police praised a taxi driver hijacked by the thief to help in his escape with the stolen painting on Thursday.

A man, armed with a sawn-off shotgun, walked into the Lefevre Gallery in Bruton Street and took 35 seconds to rip Pablo Picasso's *Tête de Femme* from the wall before fleeing to Wimbledon in south-west London.

A photograph from the gallery's surveillance camera was released yesterday. Interpol, art experts and galleries around the world have been alerted to the theft.

Jason Bennetto

## Alcoholic ice lollies recalled

Kwik Save supermarket chain yesterday ordered the recall of a faulty batch of ice lollies which ferment into alcohol, after a mother gave them to her two young children.

The supermarket chain has cleared Frozy icepops from its shelves after fears that children around the country could have eaten them. The product, made by Magna Confectioners in Shropshire, was made with a faulty recipe, which meant the lollies contained 5 per cent alcohol.

Lynne Bradburn of Manchester gave the icepops to her children aged four and six, before discovering that they tasted like gin.

## Attempt to solve 'Derbyshire' riddle

The final part of the expedition to try to solve the mystery of the largest British merchant ship ever lost at sea will start this weekend, it was announced yesterday.

The UK-EC funded expedition will spend 47 days on the wreckage site of the *MS Derbyshire* which went down in a typhoon off Japan in 1980 with the loss of all 44 people on board. Concerns about structural failure on the 169,000-tonne Teesside-built carrier led to a union-sponsored expedition examining the wreck in 1994. Their findings resulted in this official expedition being mounted, the results of which could be known later this year.

The United States research vessel, *Thomas G Thompson*, was due to leave Guam, in the Pacific, today to travel to the wreckage site more than 400 miles off Okinawa. The survey team are equipped to obtain complete Sonar and photographic coverage of the wreckage field. An official inquiry into the disaster in 1987 said the weather was probably to blame. But families of the crew, trade unions and shipping experts have long argued that the disaster was caused by structural defects in the vessel.

## Fewer strip searches for McAliskey



Roisin McAliskey, the pregnant 25-year-old being held on remand in connection with the IRA mortar attack on a British army barracks at Osnabrück, Germany, last year, has had her prison category reduced.

Ms McAliskey, left, daughter of the former nationalist MP Bernadette Devlin, was previously a Category A high-risk prisoner in Holloway Prison, north London, which meant she was strip-searched before and after prison visits. Yesterday, the Prison Service reduced her classification to Category A standard-risk which means she will be strip-searched less often and will be allowed access to a dress-making craft shop in the prison.

A spokesman for the Prison Service said she would now be subject only to random strip-searching or when "under suspicion". He said the decision was made by a group of "fairly senior members of the Prison Service" including Alan Walker, director of operation for the south region, whose beat includes Holloway. Ms McAliskey is due to give birth in May.

Matthew Brace

## Drug dealer tortured woman rival

A member of a violent drugs gang was yesterday found guilty of kidnapping and imprisoning a rival woman drug-dealer who suffered a 72-hour ordeal which included a mock execution.

The 27-year-old was stripped and repeatedly tortured with electric shocks. She was also beaten, her long hair was hacked off, and she was threatened with scalding water and told her fingers would be amputated. The woman, who was repeatedly told she was going to be killed, was only freed after frantic relatives raised a £9,000 ransom. At one point, the gang leader, Barclay Walters, pulled out a gun, loaded it with a single round, held it to her temple and pulled the trigger.

She eventually recovered physically, but would remain mentally scarred for life, Knightsbridge Crown Court was told.

Manjeet Gill, of Esher, Surrey, was convicted of kidnapping and conspiring falsely to imprison the woman. He was cleared of conspiracy to blackmail and possessing a firearm.

Gill, 32, had denied all the charges. He will be sentenced on 26 March with Anurodh Sharma, 32, who was found guilty of conspiracy falsely to imprison, after earlier owning up to the blackmail plot. Dipty Sharma, 26, was convicted of both the false imprisonment and blackmail conspiracies. Her disc-jockey husband Sanjeev Sharma, 28, and Walters, 38, had admitted both charges, as well as a firearms possession offence.

## Bee colonies ravaged by disease

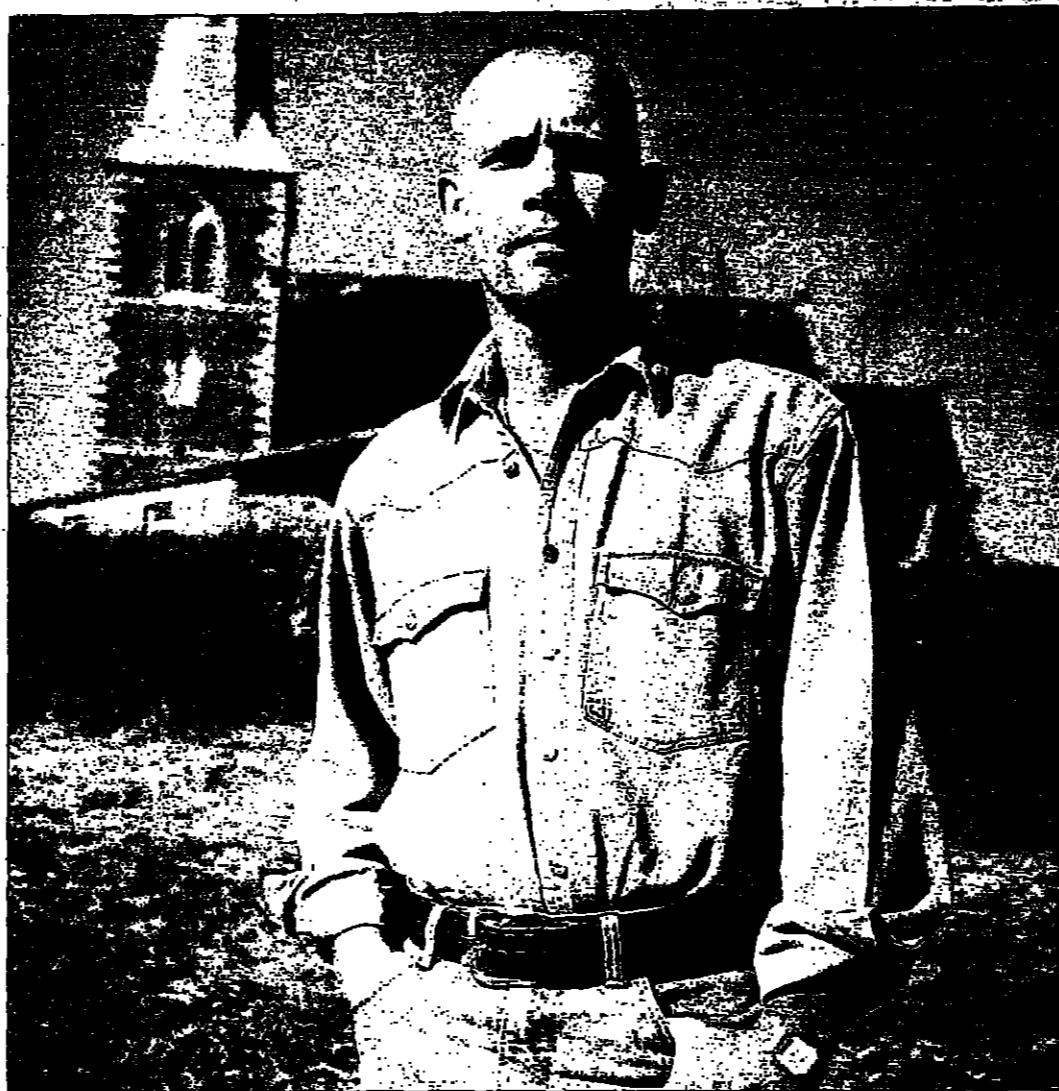
The whole of England and Wales has been declared a statutory infected area after the government and beekeepers failed to halt the spread of a devastating disease among bees.

The varroa disease, a mite infestation of bees first found in Britain in 1992, has already ravaged bee colonies in the south-east and has spread as far as the Scottish borders, as well as throughout Wales.

The statutory infected area was yesterday widened by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to include Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Cumbria and Northumbria.

The designation makes the movement of bees into and out of the infected area, prohibited except under licence.

## people



Billy Wright: The public face of a militant paramilitary loyalist movement

## Death threat puts Ulster's King Rat behind bars

Billy Wright, who as "King Rat" has been the most public face of militant loyalist extremists in Northern Ireland, was yesterday jailed for eight years for threatening to kill a woman.

The judge described the 36-year-old as a sinister man whose threats, in August 1995, had "poisoned" the woman. She was a key witness in the case, and has now left Northern Ireland. She lives under police protection at a secret address in England.

Wright's high public profile and fearsome reputation made him into both an icon of loyalist paramilitarism and a target for numerous IRA attempts on his life. He also had to contend with close RUC attention, which led him to lodge frequent complaints about "police harassment".

Last year he fell foul of his own organisation, the illegal Ulster Volunteer Force, which publicly announced that he would be killed if he did not leave Northern Ireland. Such a range of enemies led a senior police officer to say last summer: "It's really a question of who gets to him first - the IRA, the UVF or us."

The sentence shows that the race was won by the authorities. Passing judgment, Lord Justice McCollum described him as an "incredibly witness whose tendency was not capable of belief, while the woman was never had been honest, reliable, and accurate."

Outside court, one of Wright's friends said: "It's an absolute disgrace. The judgment was completely political."

Wright featured prominently in last year's Orange march standoff at Drumcree, not far from his home, when it was said he had planned an assault on police lines using an armoured bulldozer. The Ulster Unionist Party leader, David Trimble, was criticised for meeting him during the confrontation, but responded by saying he had been working to avert violence.

His brushes with the law go back at least until 1981, when he was charged with the murder of a Catholic. That case collapsed, but he later spent several years in jail for possession of a gun. Unusually for a loyalist paramilitary, he went through a religious phase during which he became a lay preacher.

David McElrick, Belfast

## Life's a drag for pleasure-loving Japanese PM

Japan's Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, is a man renowned for his love of physical pleasure. As a mountaineer, he has scaled Japan's highest and most challenging peaks. He is a black belt in kendo, the vigorous martial art of fencing with wooden staves. A few years ago, a tabloid magazine ran an interview with one of his former mistresses, who praised him for his skill and sensitivity as a lover.

But now, Mr. Hashimoto has got into trouble. Yesterday five plaintiffs from the city of Nagoya filed a legal suit claiming that the Prime Minister is in daily violation of Japan's constitution for his enthusiastic cigarette habit.

Compared to other industrialised countries, Japan is a smoker's Eden. On every street corner there is a vending machine dispensing multiple cigarette brands for 220 yen (£1.10) a packet. Television advertisements routinely show sports people finishing off their swimming or skiing routines with a hearty fag.

Like millions of his countrymen



Mr Hashimoto sees no shame in his addiction. In remarks cited by the plaintiffs he vows: "I will smoke as much as possible." To the Nagoya Five, however, these words are incendiary. They cite Article 25 of the constitution, which states: "All people shall have the right to minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living."

This, they believe, obliges prime ministers to abstain from smoking. As well as 110,000 yen in damages, they are demanding that Mr Hashimoto give up for the duration of his premiership.

Richard Lloyd Parry, Tokyo

## Marvin speaks of son's lonely death

The former Shadows guitarist, Hank Marvin, talked yesterday for the first time about the lonely death of his alcoholic son, Dean Marvin, 35, who died on 6 January in a London YMCA hostel, had reportedly not seen his father for 10 years.

Dean became estranged from his father, a Jehovah's Witness, before Hank went to live in Australia with his second wife.

Speaking on the *This Morning* TV show, Hank Marvin said: "He wanted to lead a life with no responsibility where he could drink. If I'd provided finance for him, it would have simply gone on drugs or alcohol. He was an adult. He made a lot of wrong decisions. It's really sad, but that killed him."

"Initially it was a shock and the grief is taking a while to work through but we had no idea of his condition. We knew he was drinking and taking drugs but I didn't realise he was an alcoholic. My daughter told me afterwards he had been in a bad way for 18 months."

"He got involved with people we were unhappy with and warned him against."

## Italian outrage over double surrogacy

In an unusual case of surrogate motherhood, an Italian woman is pregnant with the babies of two different couples. The 35-year-old woman, who is three-months pregnant, offered to carry both foetuses when she learned her doctor was having trouble finding surrogate mothers. *Corriere della Sera* reported yesterday.

To circumvent Italian medical rules designed to prevent surrogacy, the procedure was carried out in Switzerland, where the woman also plans to give birth. After their birth, the babies will be matched to the right parents through a blood test.

The Italian media identified the woman only as Angela, a mother of two living in Rome. In an interview

with the Turin newspaper *La Stampa*, the woman said she was receiving only expenses.

Health minister Rosy Bindi said the case had "brought us to limits never before crossed" and called for a law to regulate surrogate motherhood.

Dr Aldo Pagni, head of the Italian physicians association, said disciplinary action should be brought against the doctor responsible for the treatment.

Father Gino Concetti, a Roman Catholic moral theologian, whose views are close to those of Pope John Paul, said the pregnancy was "a new step towards madness". The Catholic Church opposes all forms of artificial human conception, including test-tube fertilisation and surrogacy. AP/Reuters, Rome

## briefing

## TECHNOLOGY

## Catalytic converter will be cheaper and cleaner

Scientists have developed a catalytic converter which would be cheaper to manufacture and more efficient in controlling exhaust emissions, they announced yesterday. Existing converters used by vehicle manufacturers all use platinum and rhodium. The new design, developed at Dundee University, replaces these precious metals with a cheaper mixture of palladium and zinc.

The university has patented its development and is now in discussions with components manufacturers around the world after presenting their breakthrough to the Society of Automobile Engineers in Detroit. They are seeking to strike a deal with a manufacturer who would test the new design and ensure that it could perform for at least 100,000 miles.

The catalyst is the invention of Professor James Cairns of the university's department of applied physics and electronic and mechanical engineering, and Dr James Thomson, lecturer in the department of chemistry. They have been working on the project for the past 11 months, after stumbling on the basic premise almost by chance.

## WHITEHALL

## Open government a myth

Public bodies are failing to meet Government guidelines on openness, a survey showed yesterday. More than a quarter of organisations contacted fell short of the standards enshrined in their published commitments to open government.

According to the *Press Gazette* survey, 50 government departments and quangos were asked for information, which the public is entitled to under the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

But results showed only 11 departments replied "quickly and willingly", 25 responded only "adequately", some giving information after being prompted to reply, and 11 failed to comply with the code by providing "wrong or inadequate" information. Some did not give any information in their responses and three refused to reply at all.

The Code of Practice was introduced in 1994 when the Government resisted calls for a Freedom of Information Act.

*Press Gazette* reported that those organisations which showed good practice included the Foreign Office, the Department of the Environment, Ofsted and the Department of Trade and Industry.



## HEALTH

## Clouds over sunshine in a bottle

Prozac, the anti-depressive drug often described as "sunshine in a bottle", can take its toll on users' sex lives, research published in the US has claimed. The downside to taking Prozac and other SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) can be a dramatic loss of libido, say the authors of a study published in *Primary Psychiatry*.

Conventional medical wisdom has long held that users of SSRIs are less prone to side-effects than those who use other forms of anti-depressants. But the US researchers say that between 40 and 50 per cent of those taking Prozac and similar anti-depressants, including Zoloft, Paxil, and Luvox, suffer from some sort of sexual dysfunction. "It is now a truth generally acknowledged that SSRIs cause sexual dysfunction more than any other class of anti-depressants," they write.

SSRIs are used by millions around the world. More than 12 million prescriptions are written for them each year in Britain alone.

## ATTENTION ALL PARENTS



## PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAGUE TABLES 1997

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# Xenophobic humour leaves a bad taste

TV advertisements are winning awards, but not from the viewers

Paul McCann  
Media Correspondent

Sex, Satan and an advertisement that has been smothered with industry awards dominated the top ten most complained-about television commercials in 1996.

The Blackcurrant Tango soft-drink advertisement, featuring the xenophobic spokesman Roy Gardner who challenges a French schoolboy to a fight because he doesn't like blackcurrants, made the Independent Television Commission's annual top ten with 68 complaints. Earlier this week the same advertisement was named "ad of the year" in the prestigious Creative Circle awards and has received similar accolades from industry magazines like *Marketing Week*.

Viewers' complaints that the commercial would encourage violence to foreigners were dismissed by the ITC on the grounds that with characters like Alf Garnett and Basil Fawlty Britain had a proud tradition of xenophobic humour.

HHCL & Partners, the advertising agency that made the Tango advertisement, made it into the top ten with another commercial for Martini. This featured a quiz show called "Get a New Face" offering cosmetic surgery to contestants so they could be good-looking enough to drink Martini. Some viewers thought the advertisement hurtful to those with facial disfigurements, and in bad taste.

"You have a young group who are getting more extreme in what they find amusing," says Rupert Howell, managing partner of HHCL. And, he believes that many who complain deserve to be offended.

Satanic imagery featured in three of the top ten. The second most complained-about commercial was for the Nissan Micra. Viewers thought it was promoting the black arts by showing a girl sticking pins in a voodoo image of her boyfriend who had borrowed her Micra. Many of the 126 viewers who

complained were convinced it would encourage children to experiment with voodoo while others thought it offensive to Christianity.

Third on the blacklist came Nike's Euro 96 commercial - featuring football-playing beasts on a fiery pitch - 121 viewers were worried by the satanic imagery used and thought it would scare children.

Similarly satanic was an advertisement for the soft drink, Jim Bru. It got into the top ten because it featured a boy with horns and glowing eyes. Sex also prompted the moral minority to pick up their pens. An advertisement for Heder painkillers showed a woman "getting in the mood" - after previously turning down her man - thanks to Heder curing her headache. After receiving 73 complaints the ITC thought the commercial too explicit and moved it to after the 9pm watershed. There was a similar problem with an advert for Addiction perfume where a couple undressed each other - too much for 83 viewers.

The most complained about advertisement of all was for a special *Coronation Street* video promoted by Granada as "only on video" in January 1995 - 600,000 copies were sold. Three months later the episode was shown on television. The ITC received 262 complaints but Granada received over 3,000 and was forced to apologise and give complainants a free *Coronation Street* book.

Virginia Lee, the ITC's spokeswoman on advertising, says there is a steady increase every year in the number of complaints about television advertisements, but she doesn't believe it means that advertising agencies are trying to push against the boundaries of taste. "Just from the first two months of 1997 I can tell we'll have even more complaints this year. I think it's a function of people starting to understand that they can complain about all sorts of things."



Tango's advert (main picture) and Nike's (above) made the top ten on the viewers' blacklist



Martini's commercial (above) was judged upsetting to those with facial disfigurements

## Security conscious Whitehall falls foul of thieves

Barrie Clement

Going to a car boot sale this weekend? It might be as well to look out for the increasingly popular designer label: "Property of HM Government". Whitehall seems to be suffering from a crime wave of its own over the past year with anything portable vulnerable to illicit removal. Perhaps most embarrassing - and worrying for the security services - was the "theft or loss" of computer equipment from the Cabinet Office.

The Ministry of Defence Policy Agency, however, may also feel slightly shamed about the 10 trunks purloined from the department together with several sets of handcuffs. Perhaps those with unusual sexual interests may find them of use.

At the Home Office, presided over by Michael Howard, celebrated for his "get tough" policy towards criminals, officials seem to have mislaid five vehicles, said to be worth £47,200. It is the most unfortunate because the Home Office has recently embarked on a campaign against car crime.

Even the Crown Prosecution Service has not been spared the attentions of footpads and ne'er do wells. It has suffered 11 separate thefts of "personal and office items" and the cerebral Serious Fraud Office, apparently used to tracking down big-time criminals with brains, has been unable to trace the thief who has struck twice.

The Inland Revenue, to whom we entrust the efficient regulation of our tax affairs, seems to have "lost" £460,000 worth of equipment and the Treasury, so parsimonious when it comes to spending money, has parted with nearly £800,000 in stolen goods.

Ian McCartney, Labour's chief employment spokesman, says government departments have been deprived of equipment worth £6m in the past year, none of which can be accounted for.

Mr McCartney, who unearthed the figure in Parliamentary Questions, said: "It is appalling that ministerial incompetence is allowing millions of pounds worth of government equipment to literally disappear. Small losses may be expected in any organisation, but when such huge amounts of equipment go missing, there is serious cause for concern."

One of the more interesting items boot fair aficionados may encounter is the nosecone of an aeroplane worth £35,849 removed from the Royal Air Force Maintenance Group Defence Agency.

## Murder case nanny seeks bail

David Osborne  
Boston, Massachusetts

Louise Woodward, the British nanny accused of killing a nine-month-old boy in her care in the United States, appeared in court last yesterday and was expected to plead innocent to a charge of first-degree murder.

Her appearance at Middlesex County Court in Cambridge, Massachusetts, followed the landing down from a grand jury on Wednesday of the first-degree indictment. The charge is the most severe possible and

Miss Woodward faces life in prison without the possibility of parole if convicted.

Defence lawyers were also expected last night to ask the judge to grant bail in the case. Miss Woodward has been held for the past three weeks at a county jail in Framingham, outside Boston.

Miss Woodward, who is from Chester, came to the US in June to work as a nanny after taking her A-levels. She was arrested last month after the boy, Matthew Eappen, was admitted to hospital apparently suffering from "shaken-baby syndrome."

He died on 9 February after five days on life support.

The parents of the victim, Deborah and Sunil Eappen, who are both doctors in Boston, have publicly asked that bail be denied.

Religious and civic leaders of Upscale Newton, Massachusetts, where the Eappens live, have urged that Miss Woodward be released pending trial.

An autopsy indicated that Matthew had died from being shaken violently at the Eappen home on 5 February. A two-and-a-half-inch skull fracture suggested the child's head had

also been struck against a solid object. Miss Woodward has told police she gently shook the child while bathing him and may have tossed him into some towels on the floor.

By asking for the first-degree charge, the grand jury signalled that it believes that Miss Woodward had acted with premeditation or with extreme atrocity and cruelty.

The defence team, from the Boston law offices of Silvergate & Good, is expected to argue that Miss Woodward may not have been alone in having contact with the infant when the in-

juries occurred. In a letter to a local newspaper, the firm said it had evidence showing that Miss Woodward was "not the only person with access to the infant who could have inflicted an injury."

The firm has not elaborated on this claim.

However, it is thought that Matthew's two-year-old brother, Brendan, was in the Eappen house on that day. Any implication of Brendan in the death has been dismissed by Mrs Eappen. "No two-year-old could inflict that kind of trauma," she said.



Louise Woodward: Accused of killing a baby in her care

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## news

# Your local, friendly bobbies on the beat ...

Yard launches inquiry after unauthorised publication of 'intimidating' photographs

Jason Bennett  
Crime Correspondent

Scotland Yard has launched an internal inquiry into the publication of a photograph showing an armed police boat patrol which critics have condemned as "macho posturing" and deliberately intimidating.

The photograph of a new maritime unit includes six specialist firearms officers clad in goggles and helmets totting automatic machine guns. None of the armed officers are members of the unit. It was taken on behalf of the boat squad and published on the front page of a yesterday's *Police Review* magazine.

Senior officers at the Metropolitan Police, including Sir Paul Condon, the Commissioner, are understood to be extremely angry about the publication, which was not authorised by the Scotland Yard headquarters. They believe it gives a false and damaging impression of the Metropolitan Police.

But a monitoring group and a London MP last night accused Scotland Yard of macho behaviour and said the picture created an image of a police state.

The photograph was used to illustrate a feature about the four-man unit based on the River Thames. Officers have specialist training in the use of rigid inflatable boats, surveillance and abseiling.

Part of the force's Thames division, the Wapping-based team, will be employed on normal river-based policing activities, such as search and rescue operations, but will have an additional role transporting and assisting officers from other specialist units, training regularly with the force's SO19 firearms teams.

Insp Michael Burke, head of the Maritime Special Operations team, wrote an article for the magazine and according to Scotland Yard provided the photographs.

The internal inquiry will examine why police headquarters was not informed about the article or the contents of the photograph, which are seen as damaging to the force's image. A spokesman said: "There are a lot of questions to be asked. The image of the Metropolitan police is of police officers in helmets walking the beat."

But Tony Banks, Labour MP for Newham North West, said: "Gradually we are slipping into a police state where officers with visible guns is becoming the norm."

"I find it very scary and totally unnecessary to have this kind of macho posturing."

Gilly Mundy, project worker of the Newham Monitoring Project, a police monitoring group in London, added: "Either this is a bad PR mistake or the police are deliberately using this image to intimidate people."



River watch: The controversial front cover of the 'Police Review' magazine showing London's river police dressed in what look like paramilitary uniforms

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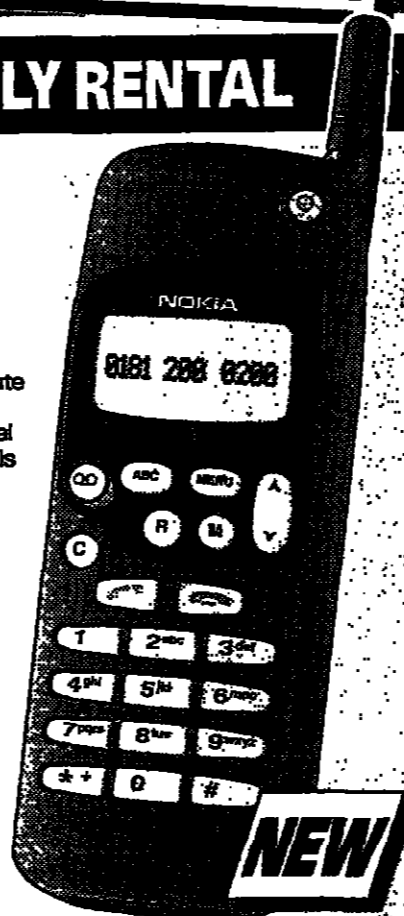
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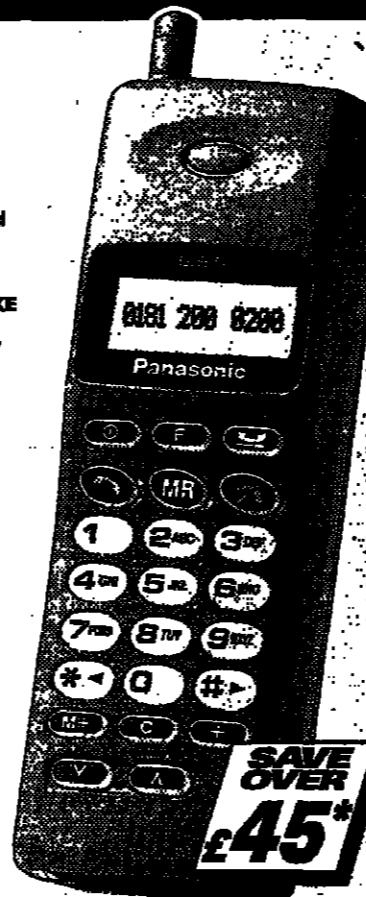
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## Dixons

There's a great deal going on

## HIV doctor put 1,700 women patients at risk

Annabel Ferriman

More than 1,700 women may have been exposed to the risk of HIV infection from a junior doctor working in obstetrics and gynaecology from February 1991 until January this year.

The doctor, who worked at four hospitals in Essex, East London and Gloucestershire, discovered their HIV status in February and notified the hospitals concerned. The sex of the doctor has not been revealed.

Four health authorities - Redbridge and Waltham Forest, South Essex, Barking and Havering and Gloucestershire - trawled the records of 50,000 women patients over the past two weeks and found that 1,752 women may have been exposed during a variety of operations. Yesterday, they sent out letters by courier to all the women involved, offering them advice, counselling and HIV testing, if appropriate.

Dr Georgia Duckworth, Regional Epidemiologist for North Thames, said: "Women will be

concerned to hear this news, but I do want to say to them that the risk of infection really is very small. We are contacting patients who have had what are known as 'exposure-prone procedures' such as major gynaecological operations like hysterectomies or Caesarian deliveries, but on the evidence of previous exercises we would not expect to find any cases of infection having been passed on. Parents do not need to be concerned about risks to babies born in any of the hospitals.

The hospitals and periods during which the doctor was employed, are: Gloucestershire Royal, Gloucester (February 1991 to October 1993); King George, Redbridge (August 1993 to February 1995); Whipps Cross, Waltham Forest (March 1995 to February 1996) and Southend (March 1996 to October 1996). Duplication of dates is due to part-time work. There have only been two reported incidents where HIV-infected health care workers have

transmitted the virus to patients. One, the case of the Florida dentist, involved transmission to six patients, and a recent report of a French orthopaedic surgeon involved transmission to one patient.

Around the world retrospective studies of more than 22,000 patients of HIV-infected health care workers have failed to show any evidence of transmission. There have been six retrospective exercises in the UK, involving about 4,500 patients, and none of those tested was found to be infected.

Dr Noel Gill, consultant epidemiologist at the Public Health Laboratory Services said: "Although the risk is small, it is too early to stop undertaking notification in cases like this." A helpline for patients from the London and Essex areas has been established on 0800 146 271. Patients from Gloucestershire can ring 0800 146091. General information about HIV infection and Aids can be obtained from the National Aids Helpline on 0800 567123.

## Lang to face court challenge over arms deals

Patricia Wynn Davies  
Legal Affairs Editor

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, is to face the first legal challenge over licensing the export of UK-manufactured armoured vehicles and water cannon to the repressive regime in Indonesia.

Japoi (the Indonesian Human Rights Campaign), the Campaign Against Arms Trade and the World Development Movement have photographic evidence and video evidence they say proves that the British government is breaking its own policies on arms export and human rights by giving the go-ahead to the exports.

The Department of Trade and Industry disclosed on 9 December last year that it had issued licences to the Coventry-based firm Alvis for 50 Scorpion armoured vehicles and to Procurement Services International Limited for a variety of police vehicles, including water cannon. It was revealed in a parliamentary answer on 23 January that the latter licence covers more than 300 armoured vehicles made by Southampton-based Glover Webb.

A letter last month from the

organisations' solicitor, Stephen Cross, to Mr Lang highlighted an incident in April, when the Indonesian army used British-made armoured vehicles to disperse a student demonstration. Three students were killed.

In June, security forces sprayed liquid from a British-manufactured armoured vehicle during a pro-democracy demonstration. Mr Cross has been advised that the chemical is likely to have been CS gas.

Government policy, set out in a consultative document following the Scott arms-for-Iraq inquiry, is "to avoid contributing to internal repression and instability, and... to avoid contributing to human rights abuses." Jeremy Hanley, the Foreign Office Minister of State, said in an answer last October that the use of water cannon to stop peaceful demonstrations was "totally unacceptable", adding: "It is totally unacceptable to use chemicals or dyes with the water cannon."

The three organisations gave Mr Lang a month to avoid the prospect of legal action by agreeing to withdraw the licences. The deadline expired at 5pm yesterday and the groups will apply for a judicial review.

## Unrest in car industry escalates

Barrie Clement  
Labour Editor

The threat of damaging pre-election walk-outs in the motor industry grew yesterday as Rover workers began voting in a strike ballot and union officials warned of the "inevitability" of an all-out stoppage at Peaseholme.

At Rover's Longbridge plant 2,000 workers have been told a plan to invest £1bn at the complex could be withdrawn if they take industrial action. Against union advice, employees who make the 400-series car sought and won a 'strike ballot' in protest at plans to change shift patterns. Labour Party leaders are keeping an eye on unrest in the industry for fear of the Tories making capital of it.

Rover workers voted against the shift changes last year in a ballot held by the company but now management insists the new arrangements go ahead. Rover says the system, which will mean lower pay, is needed because too many vehicles are being produced.

Pugeot workers in Coventry, are protesting about longer shifts and an alleged refusal by management to negotiate seriously over pay.



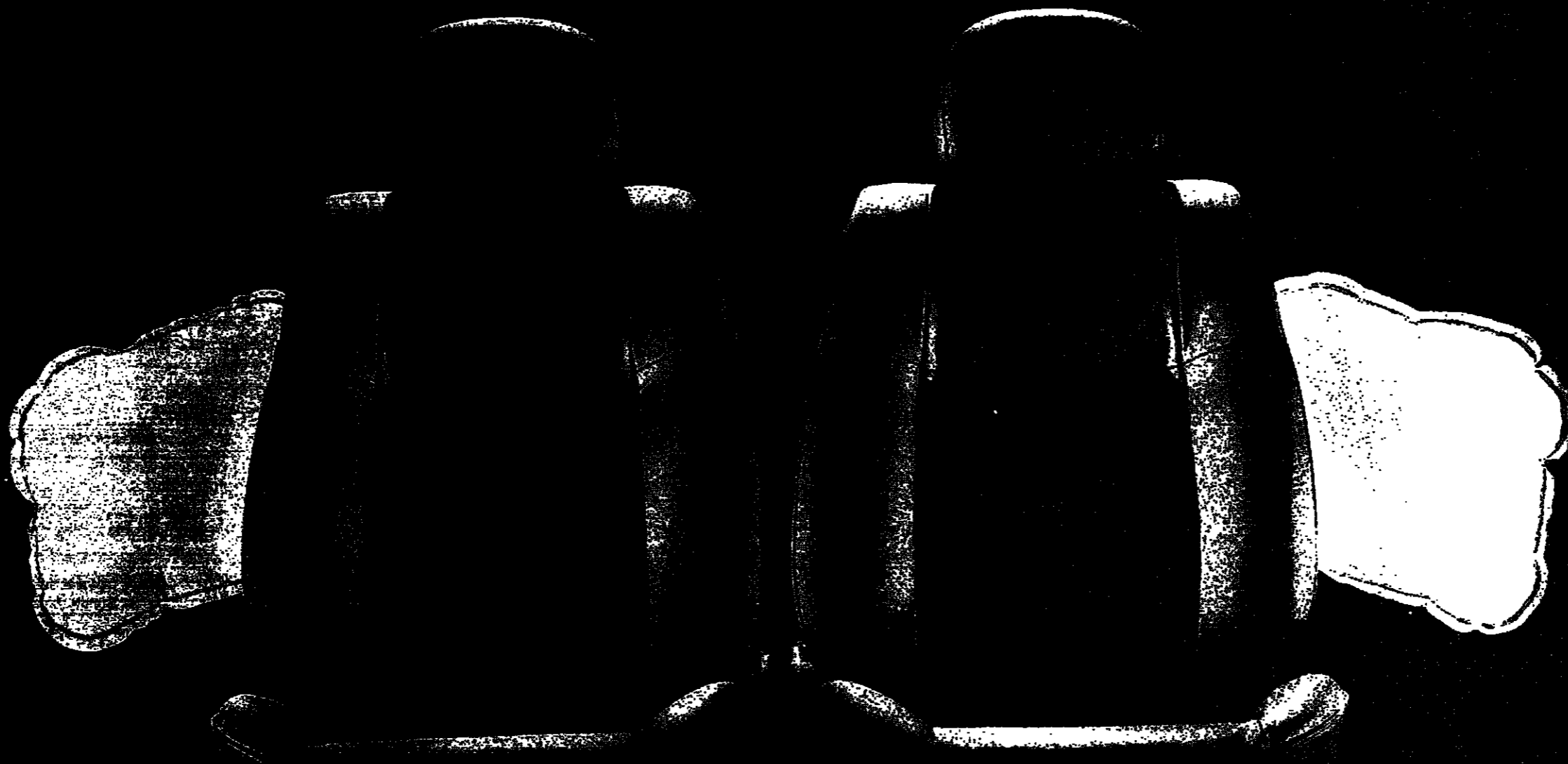
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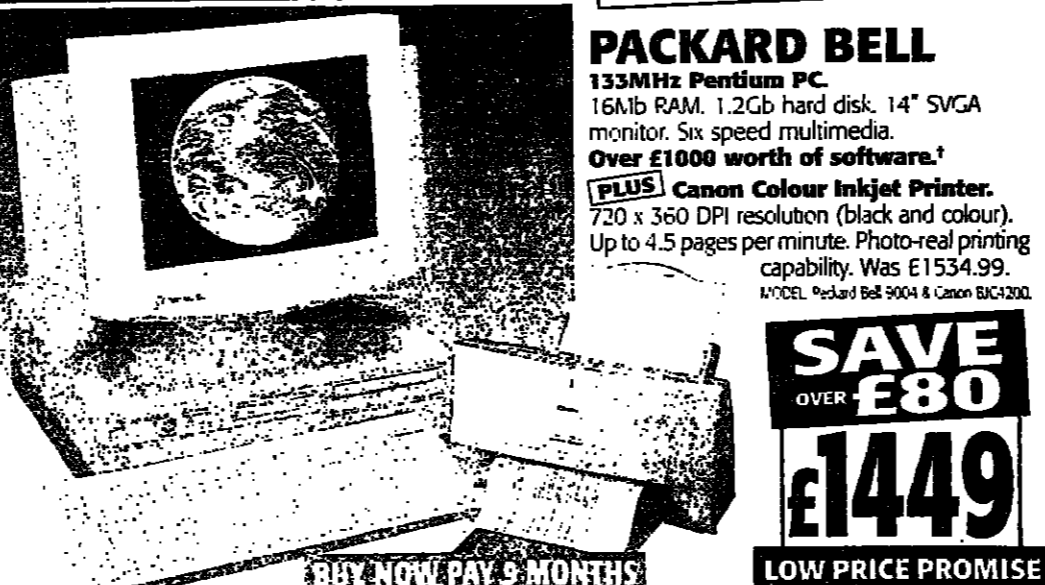
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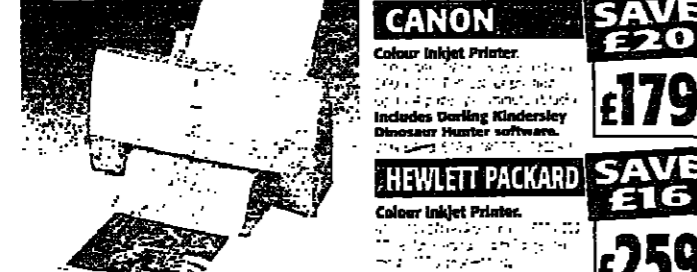
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# Hygiene attack on Scottish abattoirs

Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

Abattoir hygiene will be "vigorously criticised" in the imminent report on last November's *E. coli* 0157 outbreak in Lanarkshire, which killed 18 people, *The Independent* has learnt.

A senior Scottish health scientist, who has provided key data to help track down the source of the contamination, said that the forthcoming report will "deal with abattoir hygiene very vigorously", and added: "If hygiene standards in abattoirs were satisfactory, then you wouldn't get *E. coli* outbreaks."

The comments by Bill Reilly, assistant director of the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health in Glasgow, will add weight to those who suspect that lives might have been saved if a controversial report, *Red Meat*, on hygiene standards in British abattoirs had not been suppressed and then watered down by the Government.

Meanwhile, John Major, continued to try and damp down the internal Whitehall row over the suppression of the report by saying that it was "indicative" to suggest that senior ministers were at each others' throats over the fact that the Scottish Office had said it only received a copy of the full report on Thursday.

The first, 54-page version was finished on 14 December 1995, and contained numerous criticisms and evaluations of abattoirs' practices. A final 28-page version was issued in June 1996 to selected food industry organisations, but never officially referred to in any public government document. Professor Hugh Pennington, who is working on a final report

into the Lanarkshire *E. coli* outbreak, which centred on a single butcher's shop, also said yesterday that it was now "very important" that he was given the earlier draft reports of the Meat Hygiene Service's survey of abattoirs.

"I have only seen the final report, which one might have to say, has an element of sanitisation about it," he said. "It doesn't have raw data or numbers or percentages—it has given rather general descriptions."

The Scottish Office said that Professor Pennington would be given full access to the reports.

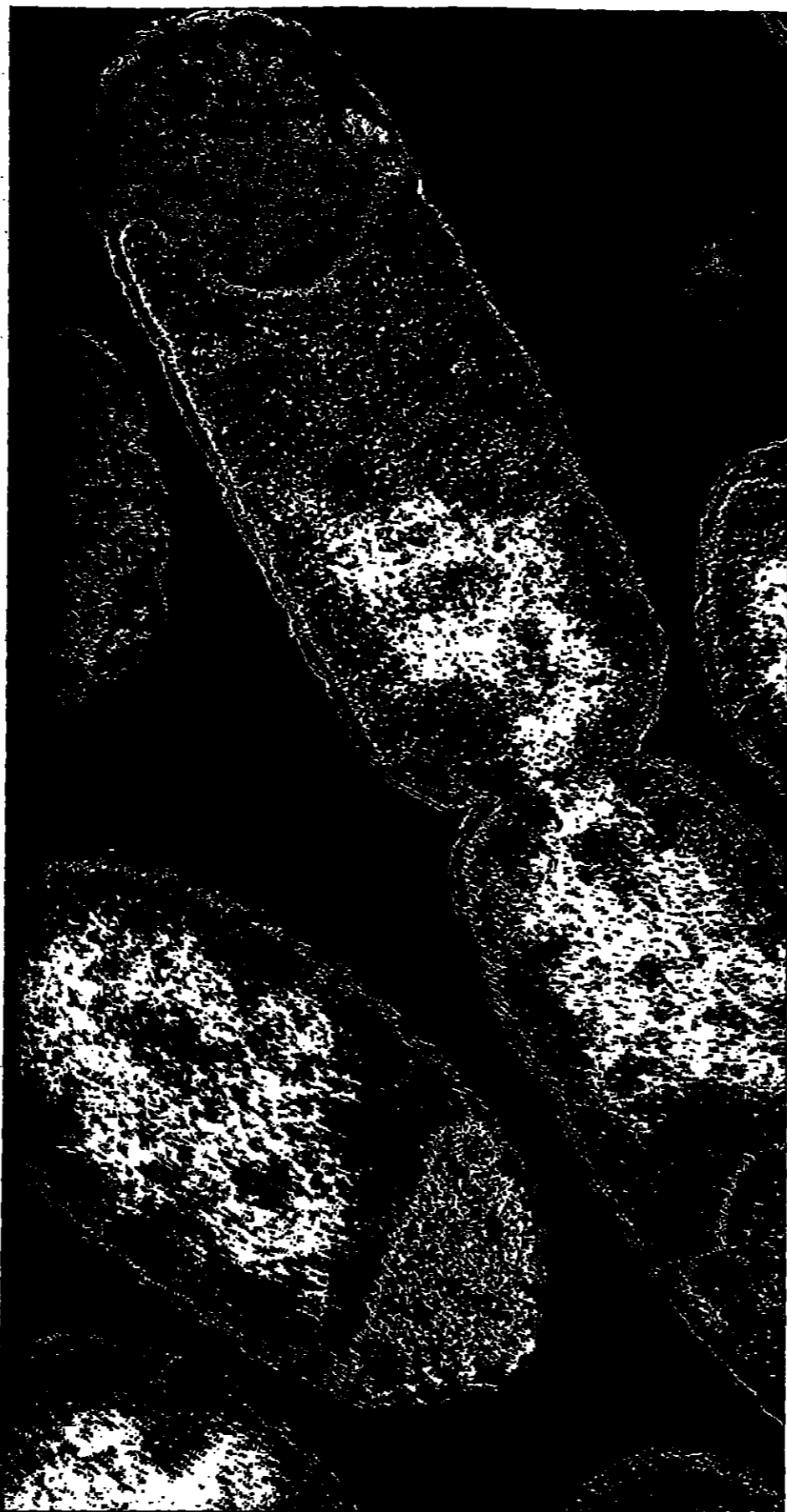
Mr Reilly, who has not yet seen the report, insisted that improving hygiene standards could have an immediate effect on preventing wide-scale *E. coli* 0157 infection. "When we have outbreaks, as opposed to sporadic cases, meat features in it," he said. "If the initial vehicle of infection was raw meat, it's possible that the abattoir would be the source."

But it can take two to three weeks for people to become ill from abattoir-infected meat—by which time no trace may remain at the source.

The Lanarkshire outbreak was the second worst case of *E. coli* poisoning in the world. An outbreak in Canada killed 19 pensioners in a nursing home in 1985.

Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland, showed his displeasure over the affair when he told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme that he would have liked to have seen the report.

In the Commons on Thursday, Mr Major told Tony Blair that there were "huge numbers of such working documents every year. If they all came to ministers for ministers to read every one, nothing else would be done."



A microscopic view of the *E. coli* bacterium.

# Water alert leaves four in hospital

Nicole Venish

Four elderly people are being treated in hospital after drinking water contaminated with the microscopic parasite *Cryptosporidium*, six days after warning notices were issued to nearly a million people.

More than a hundred people are now suffering severe stomach sickness and diarrhoea, in one of the worst outbreaks of water-borne infection to hit the South-east in the past five years. But sources investigating the crisis say they are now hoping a "plateau effect" will kick in and reduce the number of cases, presently rising daily.

French-owned Three Valleys Water issued a "boil water" warning to homes in west Hertfordshire, north-west London and Bedfordshire, after a number of people contracted *Cryptosporidium*. The infection, which causes severe diarrhoea lasting up to three weeks, is potentially fatal for children and people with deficient immune systems, such as the elderly.

A spokesman for Bedfordshire Health Authority said: "We decided to hospitalise four elderly people because we are aware that the illness can cause severe distress and possible death, in the weak and frail."

"However, I am pleased to

say that the four are currently in a stable condition and responding well to treatment."

*Cryptosporidium*, which has between a seven and 10-day incubation period, causes 4,000 cases in Britain each year. Belonging to a group of protozoa, it occurs naturally in the dung of farm animals, which can be washed from agricultural land into nearby rivers.

It is normally spread through contaminated water or contact with an infected person, but unpasteurised milk and offal also carry risks.

Frank Fitzpatrick, communication manager for Three Valleys, said: "We are leaving no stone unturned in order to find the origin of this problem, if indeed it is related to the water supply."

The company—which is currently spending £40,000 a day on increased sampling—is supplying local schools and hospitals with bottled water.

Independent inspectors from the Government Drinking Water are carrying a detailed investigation into the outbreak.

If they decide the company has been negligent in its treatment of the water supply then Three Valleys may face prosecution and the prospect of paying thousands of pounds in compensation.

# Mystery stomach bug forces school to close

Sarah Onions

Public health officials were last night investigating an outbreak of a stomach illness which has affected nearly 60 young children and forced the temporary closure of their school.

Parents of children at the St Mary's and St Peter's Church of England Junior School in Teddington, in south-west London, were told of the closure by telephone. Fifty-eight children, almost a quarter of the school's pupils, have suffered vomiting and stomach ache.

The Environmental Health team at Richmond Borough

Council has been carrying out tests at the school, along with the local public health department from the Kingston and Richmond Health Authority.

Dr Pauline Langridge said tests had been carried out by the Environmental Health officers on toilets and kitchens, which proved clear. She confirmed the Thames Water company had examined the water supply.

The initial tests by Thames Water are fine, although they still have to complete some tests," said Dr Langridge. The doctor ruled out food poisoning, as half the children affected had brought packed lunches.

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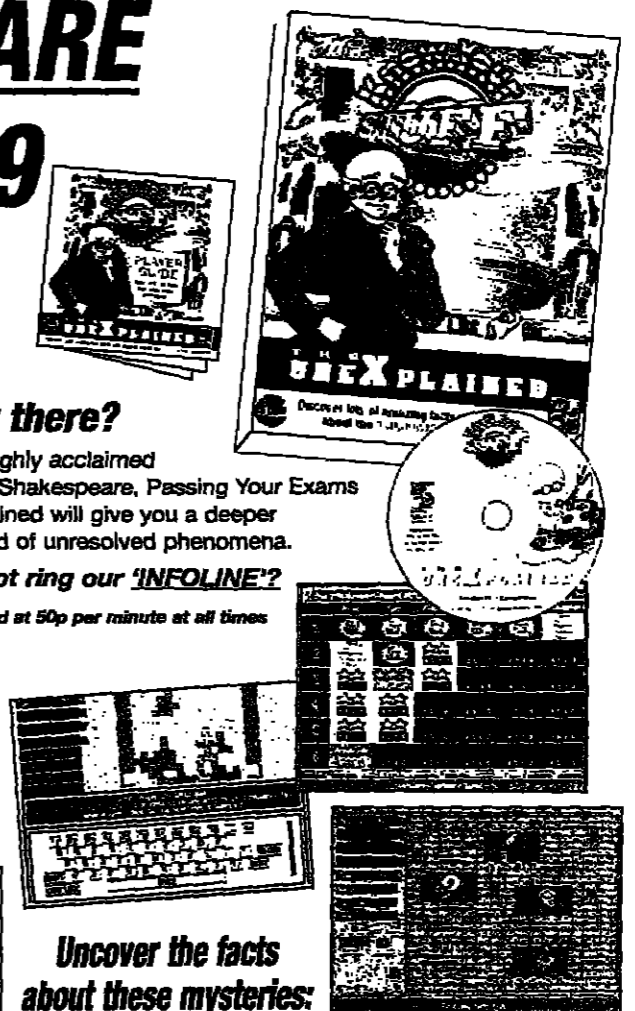
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## Professional failures that led to a family tragedy

**Martin Mursell, cared for by Camden and Islington Health Authority and Islington social services, attempted to kill his mother Mary Collins and fatally stabbed his stepfather, Joe Collins, in a frenzied attack.**

Mursell, 28, was jailed for life last year at the Old Bailey. He is now in Rampton hospital in Nottinghamshire.



are not being learnt at all," said the chairman of the inquiry, Lincoln Crawford QC. "Since Clunis one would have expected by now people would be more diligent".

While cared for in the community, housing, social services and health agencies "didn't seem to be talking to each other," said Mr Crawford. Mursell had difficulty getting accommodation, moving in between bed and breakfasts and his mother's home, and for long pe-

The social services staff who cared for Mursell had all left the borough as had most of the health team. No disciplinary action had been taken but both

Mrs Collins said she was angry no one had been made responsible. "They say it's shortage of beds or underfunding, which is true but I came across people who just didn't care ... I lost my husband and I lost my son. It is not enough to say that no one can be held responsible ... You can't make decisions and walk away from them and make people suffer."

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## Machete man sent to secure mental hospital

The judge said anyone hearing the proceedings would realize Campbell was "deranged." The attack stemmed from his delusion that the children were

charge, should receive a bravery award for her actions. "It is beyond doubt she deserves some public recognition,"

Miss Potts, who was not in court yesterday, later described the sentence as the "end of a nightmare".



### Horrett Campbell: Paranoid

The judge said that nursery nurse Lisa Potts, who suffered a serious injury while trying to protect the children in her charge, should receive a bravery award for her actions. "It is beyond doubt she deserves some public recognition."

Miss Potts, who was not in court yesterday, later described the sentence as the "end of a nightmare".

هكذا من الأمل





# Judges declare court fee hike a bar to justice

Patricia Wynn Davies  
Legal Affairs Editor

Access to the courts is a constitutional right which cannot be overridden by the government without the clearest possible sanction by Parliament, two judges declared yesterday in a crushing judgment against the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern.

The ruling – in the first ever contested judicial review to succeed against a Lord Chancellor – declared illegal part of sweeping increases in court “entrance” fees. The decision leaves in disarray the new regulations introduced in January by Lord Mackay.

Lord Justice Rose and Mr Justice Laws upheld a test complaint by John Witham, a former businessman now dependent on benefit, that the Lord Chancellor had acted beyond his powers by abolishing an exemption from fees for people on income support and the right of others on low incomes to apply for reductions.

Mr Witham, 50, from Essex, could not afford the new £500 fee to issue a High Court writ to bring an action for libel against an insurance company, but he got legal aid to pursue the judicial review.

The judgment is as much an indictment of the Treasury as of the Lord Chancellor. The new regulations raised the High Court fee from £120 and introduced rises of between 50 and 150 per cent in other civil proceedings, in line with gov-

ernment policy to make the courts self-financing. Lord Mackay made the new rules under section 130 of the 1981 Supreme Court Act, but Mr Justice Laws said the effect was to “bar absolutely” many people from seeking justice from the courts in a wide-ranging variety of situations, including debt and housing cases.

“Access to the courts is a constitutional right,” he said. “It can only be denied by the government if it persuades Parliament to pass legislation which specifically – in effect by express provision – permits the executive to turn people away from the courts.”

Leave to appeal was refused, which means Lord Mackay would have to apply to the Court of Appeal if he wants to contest the decision. Unless he does so successfully, the ruling has the effect of reinstating the protections for people on low incomes.

Mr Witham said: “Thank God we live in this country and are subject to the laws of this country.”

The ruling was hailed by legal rights groups and the Law Society, who called on Lord Mackay to bring back the exemptions in the county as well as the higher courts.

Vicki Chapman, policy officer for the Legal Action Group, which supplied evidence on hardship cases to the judges, said: “This judgment is a devastating blow to the Lord Chancellor. Justice which is available only to those who can afford substan-

tial fees is no justice at all.” Geoffrey Blidman, of Bindman & Partners, the solicitors in the case, said: “The judges are saying that where the government tries to take away basic rights, they will intervene.”

Mr Justice Laws – the government’s chief counsel before his appointment to the High Court bench – has already made clear extra-judicially his belief that some rights are fundamental, even under the UK’s unwritten constitution.

After posing the question “do we have constitutional rights at all?” in yesterday’s judgment, he said: “The right to a fair trial, which of necessity imports the right of access to the court, is as near to an absolute right as any I can envisage.”

Lord Justice Rose said there was nothing to suggest Parliament ever intended “a power for the Lord Chancellor to prescribe fees so as totally to preclude the poor from access to the courts”.



Green and pleasant lands: Duffryn Gardens, which are to be restored to their original Edwardian glory thanks to a £3,255,800 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The grounds, the finest surviving work of Thomas Mawson, cover 55 acres in the Vale of Glamorgan, Wales. Photograph: Gareth Everett



The 200-year-old map of Eigg whose ownership is disputed

## Islanders' fear as mystery buyer enters Eigg race

Kate Watson-Smyth

The long-running battle for ownership of the Isle of Eigg took another turn yesterday as residents, who want to buy the tiny island, discovered they are facing competition from a rival bidder.

News of the mystery buyer came as islanders fought to save off an attempt by a previous owner to remove a 200-year-old map from the island.

It is the second time they have tried to buy the Scottish island which has been up for sale since last summer. Their first bid in November was rejected but they have since “significantly increased” their first offer of £1.4m.

The island, which has only 63 inhabitants, was put on the market last summer by the German artist Martin Eekhard Maruma, for £2m. He bought it in 1995 from Keith Schellenberg, a Yorkshire businessman.

Despite the fact that Mr Schellenberg left the island more than two years ago residents are still fighting to stop him removing a priceless map of the island which has been there for 200 years. He tried to take the map with him when he left, but furious islanders barricaded the craft shop where the map was awaiting transportation to the mainland, and “incandescent with rage”, he was forced to leave without it.

Undeterred, he took out a court action to establish ownership of the map. Mr Maruma claims there was a gentlemen’s agreement between the two men that the map and other documents belong to the owner and should not be removed from the island. But when the

case came to court last month Mr Maruma did not turn up and Mr Schellenberg was able to lay legal claim to it.

The map is now in the hands of Eigg’s special police constable, Colin Carr. Chief Inspector John McFadden, of Fort William police, said the court had ordered the map to be handed over to Mr Schellenberg as the legal owner. “We are trying to comply with that order but we are having certain logistical problems,” he said.

Maggie Fyfe, secretary of the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust, which is trying to buy the island in partnership with the Highland Council and Scottish Wildlife Trust, said the map belonged on the island.

“It would be blatant asset-stripping of the worst kind if something as important as the map, which is part of Eigg’s heritage, leaves the island,” she said. “The island has changed hands many times in the two centuries which have intervened but not one owner has tried to take it with them so what gives Keith Schellenberg the right?”

But even if they manage to fight off Mr Schellenberg the islanders are worried about the island passing into the hands of another wealthy but absent landowner. The mystery buyer is rumoured to be a semi-retired farmer and property dealer, Graham Mellstrom, from Hampshire. Mr Mellstrom is currently in Germany and could not be contacted.

His son, Stephen, said he could not confirm whether his father had put in a bid. “I know nothing about his plans,” he said. “He keeps that side of his life very much to himself...”

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## news

# Lib Democrats in push to win women's vote

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

The Liberal Democrats will become the latest political party to make a concerted push for the women's vote today.

Their spring conference coincides with International Women's Day and they will set out on this fact to highlight pro-women policies on health and education.

Shirley Williams, the party's most well-known female politician, will use this weekend's gathering in Cardiff as a launchpad for a high-profile election effort which will aim to win over female voters. Baroness Williams is expected to appear frequently for the party during the campaign, taking a major national role and making a number of media appearances.

Diana Maddock, who speaks for the parliamentary party on women's issues, claimed at a rally last night that it could make the face of Westminster more women-friendly.

"It is time we stopped having more MPs called John than

women MPs," she said. The Liberal Democrats would be "more geared towards co-operation in finding solutions to the key issues than confrontation."

In a debate on health today, the party's health spokesman, Simon Hughes, will claim it is committed to promoting equal treatment of the sexes within the health service, which is primarily used by women.

The Liberal Democrats would require hospitals to publish details of diagnoses and treatments by gender so that discrepancies can be identified and tackled, he will say.

In addition, the party would ask GPs' surgeries and other health facilities to operate flexible opening hours so that they would be more accessible to women, and would set targets to make it easier for women to consult female doctors and other health professionals.

Mr Hughes will also spell out a six-point "challenge" to the other parties on health, asking them to halt closures, invest in staff, set a six-month maximum for waiting lists, restore free

dental and eye checks, set up a national inspectorate to monitor care and end the two-tier service with the private sector.

The party will also use its weekend conference to highlight its policies on women and work.

It would bring in tougher obligations on employers to establish equal opportunities procedures and would introduce equal treatment legislation which would increase responsibilities on recruitment, pay and promotion.

Lord Home, chairman of the party's general election campaign, also used last night's rally to attack both the Conservatives and Labour.

"I woke up in the middle of last night with a frightening thought. What if cloning humans was not two years away? What if it was already here? What if Michael Howard had been cloned as Jack Straw and Kenneth Clarke as Gordon Brown?"

"I can hear Labour's campaign song now. It's *Hello Dolly*," he said.

... while the party's leader looks to the future for his support



Political lesson: The Liberal Democrat's leader Paddy Ashdown with pupils at Trefonnen primary school in Llandrindod Wells yesterday on the eve of the party's spring conference in Cardiff

## Subaru

# 3

Monte Carlo Rally  
Swedish Rally  
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## Rest of the World

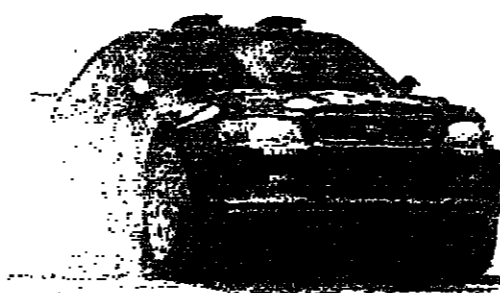
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# Blair will not take victory for granted

Tony Blair, the Labour leader, yesterday described himself as "the eternal warrior against complacency" and warned that even if Labour won the general election there would be "no victory dances".

In a firm slap-down to MPs such as Robin Cook, the party's foreign affairs spokesman, who earlier this week predicted a "landslide" victory for Labour at the general election, Mr Blair said he was taking nothing for granted.

Mr Blair told Labour's Scottish conference in Inverness that last week's by-election in Wirral South was a historic win for Labour.

But he stressed: "A by-election is still a by-election. A general election is still to come, and there is only one opinion poll that matters and that is the one on election day."

"I am and remain the eternal warrior against complacency. We are doing well but we take nothing for granted," he said.

Mr Blair's words will also be seen as a warning for his party not to get carried away by opinion polls such as the Gallup Poll yesterday in the *Daily Telegraph* which put the Tories an unprecedented 26 points behind Labour with less than two months to go to polling day.

Mr Blair said: "From now until the day of decision comes, we carry on as we have been doing, patiently, sensibly, building up trust with the British people with responsibility and humility."

"Even if we win, there will be no victory dances. For then, the

hard work in serving our country begins in earnest."

Addressing Labour's last major political event in Scotland before the election, Mr Blair renewed his pledge that if his party won the general election a Labour government would legislate in its first year for a Scottish Parliament.

"We will hold a referendum as soon as possible after coming to office. I will be here campaigning for a 'yes' vote in that referendum. There will be two questions. I will be campaigning for two 'yes' answers," he said.

Labour plans to ask the Scottish people two questions in a plebiscite - first whether they want a Scottish Parliament and second whether it should have tax-raising powers.

Earlier yesterday Alex Salmond, the Scottish National Party leader renewed his call for such a referendum to include his favoured option of full-blown independence.

But Mr Blair rounded on the SNP, accusing them of sitting on the fence for failing to say whether they would support a 'yes' campaign.

Mr Blair also announced plans to free up an extra £30m for patient care in Scotland.

He said George Robertson, Labour's spokesman on Scottish affairs, had come up with a plan to cut the number of NHS trusts in Scotland from 45 to 25.

"With our other savings it will mean £30m more for patient care in Scotland," he said.

Mr Blair also renewed his pledge to end the "scandal" of hereditary peers.

# Labour backers target phone-ins

Kate Watson-Smyth

Members of a Labour Party support group are targeting television and radio phone-in programmes in a concerted effort to marshal support in the run-up to the election.

The *Independent* has obtained a copy of a memo listing all the programmes which members of the Labour Industry Finance Group have been asked to call to back the party's manifesto publicly.

However, the memo urges them not to appear "too partisan" when making their calls.

"The key to success with all phone-in and audience participation programmes is get questions in early, and don't appear too partisan when speaking to the producer," it says.

Under the rallying cry "A Campaigning Election Call" the memo urges supporters to air their views on as many programmes as possible. "We are uniquely placed as party members in business to grasp the opportunity, rather than leave the Tories and others to make a business case for the return of their chosen party," it says. "Below is a list of national programming - tune in and air your views."

They are asked to ring BBC1's *Question Time* programme and "cross swords with the panel" as well as a range of television and radio programmes including Radio 4's *Feedback* and *Any Answers* programme and Channel 4's *Right to Reply*.

At the end of the memo is a list of numbers to call in case of a complaint about a programme "because you thought it was unbalanced, biased or inaccurate, or missed the point".

The support group is made up of businessmen and authors who have a special interest in transport. No one was available for comment yesterday. But a spokesman for Gordon Brown's office said the group "supports Labour and comes up with initiatives".

The latest "initiative" did not seem to concern the Labour Party greatly. "It's nothing to do with us," said a spokesman.

A spokesman for Radio 4 said that all callers are asked if they have any political affiliations or interests when they ring in. "We try to avoid having a constant stream of lobbyists phoning in and on the whole they are an honest bunch, but we do try to weed them out as early as possible," he said.

هكذا من الأصل

# Looted arms fortify rebels' fighting spirit

Emma Daly  
Vlora

It might be art, a monumental modern metal sculpture, but is the handwork of the unknown agents who torched an armoury containing at least half a dozen anti-aircraft guns and hundreds of army helmets. The skeletal barrels of the anti-aircraft guns point up through what was the roof as smoke eddies from timbers still burning in the military barracks in Vlora.

People living near the complex, which was trashed by leaders of the revolt in southern Albania, are said to have moved out for the moment; the building next door is filled with tons of ammunition. Green boxes are piled up to the ceiling, and the floor is littered with hand grenades, mortar bombs, and artillery and tank shells.

We scurry back shrieking "No!" as our guide picks up a rocket-propelled grenade and waves it around proudly.

Another room is filled with anti-tank mines, while the debris outside includes ammunition belts, training rifles and gas masks. A captain in the Albanian army surveys the scene and removes the RPG from our

over-enthusiastic guide. He says about 50 of the 200 soldiers stationed here have abandoned the government in favour of the "people".

One is Major Dalip Done. "We are not against the people, we are against the government," he says, making no mention of President Sali Berisha's offer of an amnesty to those who lay down their weapons. "Everyone here has arms, and we are all ready to fight."

The people of Vlora, along with their compatriots in a large chunk of southern Albania, were first roused to anger when the pyramid schemes run by allies of President Berisha collapsed, swallowing their life-savings. They wanted their money back but Mr Berisha ordered the police to crack down on the anti-pyramid protests, which fired the crowds' anger.

Yesterday, protesters in Vlora organised the printing of leaflets in Albanian and English which they thrust on the foreign press and which seemed to be the closest thing to an official reaction.

"Berisha go away! You are crazy. People will win against you. You can't kill the heroic people of Vlora. We want new elections," the leaflets read. But it is by no means certain that a political solution, other than the resignation of Mr Berisha, will enable Tirana to restore order. "In Vlora, people are fighting the government, but not because they want to make a government," said Geni, a young man passing an anti-Berisha rally in Vlora.

The protests do not seem to have thrown up any political leaders and the doings of the opposition leaders in Tirana do not seem to weigh heavily on the people of the rebellious coast. It is difficult to see Mr Berisha resolving the situation by talking or by shooting.

The problem would be finding any "rebels" to negotiate with. There are no organised structures. "In Vlora there are two factors: the criminals and the average people. The criminals are doing the looting and the average people don't like that. But when it comes to the police and the authorities, they are united," said an outsider who has lived in the town for years. They all hate Mr Berisha.

The military prospects are worse, even without the international opprobrium an assault



Arms and the boy: A schoolboy armed with a rifle standing guard between local officials and anti-government demonstrators yesterday in the southern port of Sarande, where thousands of people have risen up against Sali Berisha and seized an array of weapons Photograph: Yannis Behrakis/Reuters

## Berisha faces new demands

Tirana (AP) — Armed protesters holding several southern towns and opposition politicians in Tirana both issued new demands a day after an agreement in which President Sali Berisha agreed to a 48-hour halt in offensive military operations.

European diplomats who met Mr Berisha said he refused to consider elections any time soon, or allowing Socialists — the former communists — into the government.

Rene Van der Linden, deputy chief of the Council of Europe, from The Netherlands, said of a meeting with Berisha: "Firstly, he underlined the necessity to continue political dialogue. Secondly, he wants to use only peaceful means. A coalition with the Socialist Party is not accepted, and, in the short term, there's no room for new elections."

## Belgrade students force rector to quit

Tony Barber  
Europe Editor

Serbian students celebrated victory yesterday after the diarch pro-government rector of Belgrade University resigned in response to more than 100 days of student boycotts and street protests. Dragutin Velickovic, who was appointed by the Socialist government of President Slobodan Milosevic, announced his resignation as part of a deal under which the students agreed to return to their classes.

It was the Socialist authorities' second major concession to their political opponents this year. Last month, after weeks of daily pro-democracy demonstrations across Serbia, Mr Milosevic finally recognised opposition victories in last November's municipal elections in Belgrade and other cities.

For the students, the resignation of their despised rector was so important a demand that they continued their protests even after the authorities acknowledged the opposition election successes. Mr Velickovic resisted almost to the end, vowing last Tuesday that he

would seek the dismissal of all the university deans who had supported the students' call for his removal.

It is possible that there is more to the rector's resignation than meets the eye. His departure from office must be approved on 20 March by the Belgrade University council, but that body is packed with pro-Socialist stalwarts.

In the weeks leading up to his resignation, Mr Velickovic was the butt of several student stunts designed to ridicule him in the public eye. Playing on the fact that he was generally keeping a low profile, students went looking for him in Belgrade zoo, peered through telescopes in the city's observatory in case he was in outer space, and fished for him in the Sava river using a red Socialist Party card as bait.

Despite their concessions over the election results and the rector, the ruling Socialists have continued to harry the opposition on other fronts. Last Thursday the pro-Milosevic state television and radio network said it would stop helping an independent station, BK Television, to broadcast programmes outside Belgrade.

BK is owned by one of Mr Milosevic's political critics and has reported extensively on the anti-government protests of recent months. By limiting its broadcasts to Belgrade, Mr Milosevic seems intent on preventing the opposition's views from attracting an audience in rural areas of Serbia where he still retains public support.

The opposition coalition movement, Zajedno (Together), said it would hold a rally tomorrow (Sunday) and dedicate it to the struggle for media freedom in Serbia.



Dragutin Velickovic: Kept a low profile during campaign

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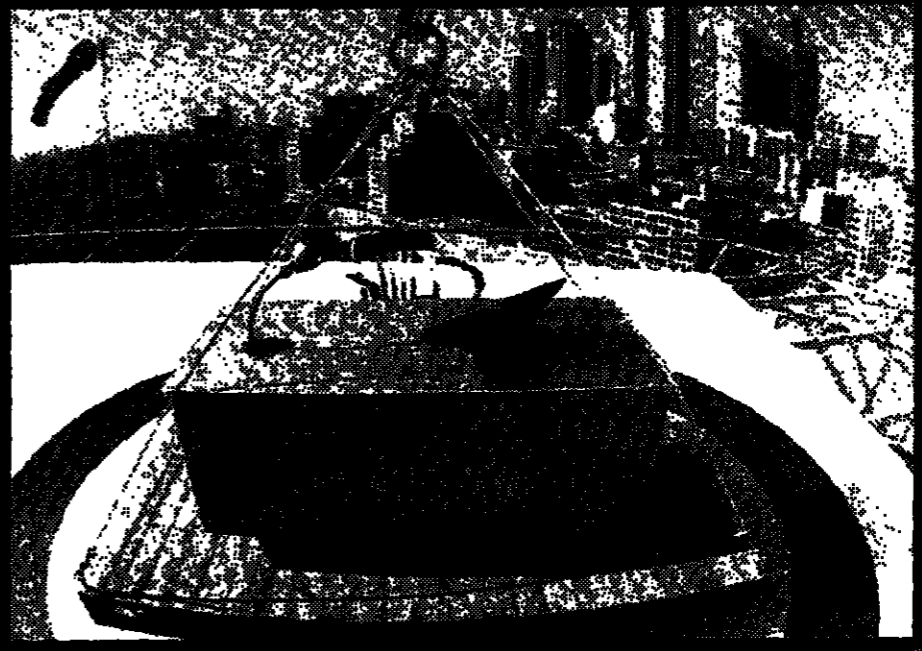
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# Har Homa lays foundations for new violence

Patrick Cockburn  
Har Homa

"I own land near here and I think that if the Israelis build a settlement at Har Homa they will confiscate it as well," said Emily Richmawi, an elderly Palestinian woman, as she clutched her banner during a demonstration below the pine-covered hill in south Jerusalem where Israel plans to build a settlement for 20,000 Jews.

Israeli riflemen in purple berets lay spreadeagled on the rocks overlooking the road down which 1,000 Palestinians were trying to reach Har Homa. Mrs Richmawi explained that her life had got worse since the Oslo agreement was signed. Not only had confiscations continued, but "we even need a permit to get into Jerusalem".

Despite Palestinian anger over Har Homa, known to Palestinians as Jabal Abu Ghneim, Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, was clearly eager yesterday to avoid violence. Middle-aged men in green and white baseball caps, members of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service, mingled with

the crowd, pushing back anybody who looked like a potential stone-thrower.

There may not be many more peaceful demonstrations at Har Homa. "People don't think they can stop the settlement being built," said Osama Zarour, a Canadian Palestinian, as he watched the rally with his two-and-a-half year old daughter, Yasmin, perched on his shoulders. "But once the bulldozers start moving there will be trouble. We have to do something. Getting publicity isn't enough."

For the moment, publicity is what Mr Arafat is after. Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, has lost much of the international credibility he gained after he agreed to a partial Israeli withdrawal from Hebron in January. The Palestinian leader received a notably sympathetic reception during his four-day visit to the US.

Har Homa is overshadowing the decision by the Israeli cabinet yesterday to withdraw from a further 9 per cent of the West Bank. Agreement was reached after a prolonged session in the early hours of yesterday morning by a vote of 10 to sev-

en ministers. The most important change is that 7 per cent of so-called area "B", where Israel has security control, but Palestinians have civilian authority will join area "A", where Palestinians have total control. There will be two more withdrawals by the middle of next year.

The West Bank will remain a jigsaw puzzle with Palestinians in control of the towns, but not of their hinterland. Israeli troops will leave villages like Halhoul with a population of 25,000 north of Hebron. But the areas of Palestinian control remain cantons which Israeli forces can easily isolate. More than a million West Bank Palestinians cannot visit their main population and commercial centre which is East Jerusalem.

In persuading the cabinet to support him yesterday Mr Netanyahu is reported to have said: "The Americans are pressuring me. We have no choice." As a result, part of the extreme right opposed to Oslo blames the US for what it sees as a retreat from the dream of the Land of Israel stretching from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. A sign of this anger was a fierce clash this



Faith and steel: An Israeli soldier standing guard as Palestinians pray during a protest against a new Jewish settlement at Har Homa. Photograph: AP

week between Martin Indyk, the US ambassador, who is Jewish, and Rehavam Zeevi, a member of the Knesset and leader of the far-right party Moledet.

The argument began when Mr Zeevi called Mr Indyk "a kike" (Canadian slang for a Jew) two weeks ago. Mr Indyk complained and at a ceremony this week went up to Mr Zeevi

and said: "The last time somebody called me a kike was when I was a 15-year-old and I punched him in the face." To this Mr Zeevi said: "Well, try it. Let's see you. You're a kike." Mr Indyk said: "You're a disgrace to your people." Mr Zeevi said: "You're a son of a bitch."

The US is annoyed with Mr Netanyahu over Har Homa

and his announcement that four Palestinian offices are to be closed in Jerusalem. Nahum Barnea, the Israeli columnist, says the US views the closure of the offices as "proof of Netanyahu's chronic weakness - to stray from essential matters and consummate his addiction for public relations stunts." In this case, one of the offices to

be closed as part of Mr Arafat's Palestinian Authority - the Islamic Committee for the Struggle Against Settlements - turns out not to be an office but a filing cabinet. The committee has not met for eight months.

Mr Netanyahu says if he is squeezed too hard by the right he will form a National Unity government with Labour. This

could happen. The Prime Minister does not have to stand for reelection for three-and-a-half years. But his popularity is low. An opinion poll shows that at present he would get 21 per cent of the vote if he stood against the most likely candidates. But Labour is itself deeply divided and still led by Shimon Peres, defeated Mr Netanyahu last year.

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## Accidental killer is latest Chinese hero

Teresa Poole  
Peking

For more than three decades, every Chinese schoolchild has been brought up to "Learn from Lei Feng", the young soldier whose overwhelming desire to be "a rustless screw in the machine of the revolution" was cruelly cut short at the age of 22. But it is only this week that generations have discovered the unlikely details of his death - as featured in the first blockbuster propaganda film to hit China in the post-Deng era, *The Days After I Left Lei Feng*.

A snappier title would have been, *How I Accidentally Killed China's Greatest Model Worker*. But this is not a film which has to worry about box-office sales. Since its release last week, the edict has gone out from the central government to "organise youngsters and adolescents in primary and middle schools, colleges, enterprises, government offices and army units to watch the film". Discussion groups and essays will "help the youth understand the importance of advocating Lei Feng's spirit under new historical conditions".

Until now, the official version of Soldier Lei's demise was a vague description about how a telegraph pole fell on his head. The new version is even sillier. A summary of the early plot might go as follows: the hapless Qiao Anshan, a soldier colleague of our model hero, shows considerable tolerance for Mr Lei's attempts to make him give up smoking, even when he forces him to drive a truck over his last cigarettes. Mr Lei then gives Mr Qiao some sweet potato chips as a nicotine substitute.

Back at camp, the two men decide to service the truck themselves, to save money for the revolution. For this, Mr Qiao must drive the truck down a narrow pathway, past some rather puny looking wooden poles. Mr Qiao

is by this point clearly in the irritable state of a man who has just given up smoking. With Mr Lei on the ground shouting instructions, Mr Qiao misjudges the width of the truck and manages to knock down one of the slim poles so precisely as to kill our hero with one bump to the head. Clearly an accident - or justifiable homicide from the point of view of any serious smoker.

Anyway, some cynics doubt that Lei Feng ever existed before his death in 1962. Others marvel at how the following year the army propaganda cadres "found" the Lei Feng diaries, which documented a life of self-sacrifice helping the poor.

But now it is the turn of Qiao Anshan, an unlikely hero for the propaganda machine. After escaping punishment for Mr Lei's accidental death, Mr Qiao, 57, has devoted his life to living up to the Lei Feng model. But there are challenges for any Good Samaritan under the "new historical conditions" of modern, venal China, and this is where the film plot becomes much more plausible.

Mr Qiao is shown picking up a hit-and-run accident victim in the late Eighties. But the old man's relatives, in a race to avoid the high medical charges demanded by any state hospital, accuse Mr Qiao of having run his father down. A devastated Mr Qiao faces bankruptcy, until the police (improbably) track down the real driver.

When Mr Qiao's own truck later gets stuck solid in the mud, no one will help him. "Times have changed, you've got to offer them money," his son says. Mr Qiao rejects such an idea. And a group of middle-school students saves the day.

The question now is whether this Mr Qiao really exists - and how he feels about being named as the man who drove the truck that knocked down the pole that fell down and killed Lei Feng.

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# Culinary conversion on the road from Bolton

In my early days as a reporter, I won only one distinction: I held the record at the *Bolton Evening News* for the most rapid consumption of bacon, eggs and chips in the office canteen.

I have retained an attachment to food, good and plain, preferably in generous quantities. But, until this week, I never had much interest in, patience for, or willingness to invest in, *haute cuisine*.

Three things happened in the past few days to modify that. One was the appearance of the 1997 *Michelin Guide*, which aroused my curiosity about the status of the leading French chefs, who are almost as fêted as movie stars. Another was the discovery, from another newspaper, of a French cut-price system for posh meals, modelled on the airline system of economy flights – a kind of culinary bucket shop. But my first gastronomic experience of the week was accidental.

After two months cooped in a Paris apartment, with occasional day trips for good behaviour, the children had been demanding to go to the countryside. We were recommended a chateau in Burgundy, which offers cheap weekend breaks.

After two hours on the road, in a slow-moving Amazon of cars, we had reached Fontainebleau, 40 miles south of Paris. Two hours later we reached the Chateau de Chailly, a fairy-tale castle with pointed turrets and smartly converted stables for guests.

Three things became clear. First, we were the only people staying in the chateau, or the chateau stables, that night. Secondly, the chateau restaurant, an ambitious, gastronomic establishment, had been kept open exclusively for us, and was about to close. Thirdly, the children, force-fed on the road, had no intention of going to sleep.

The dinner-suited waiters looked crestfallen. Plainly they had hoped for grander visitors. But Gallic pragmatism triumphed. Room service was not normally provided but, since we were the only guests, they would bring the restaurant to us. We could hear the trolley bumping over the ancient cobbles of the chateau courtyard for several minutes before the food arrived.

With Clare screaming that her bedclothes were an inch too far to the right and Charlie watching a German version of Noel's *House Party* on TV, we ate an extraordinarily beautiful meal: a meal that was delicate and simple, in the way that strings of pearls are simple: a meal that



**John Lichfield** loses his soul and stomach to *haute cuisine* in a child-infested chateau chambre

was meant to be eaten slowly by candlelight with great concentration, as if listening to music.

When the 1997 *Michelin Guide* emerged on Monday, our chateau was mentioned only as a hotel, not as a restaurant. This implies that there are 4,000 better restaurants in France, which must be an injustice. But what would I know, with my taste buds ruined years ago by steaming mounds of bacon, eggs and chips?

Having caught the bug, I decided to try out the service provided by Degristour, a French economy-travel company, which offers a kind of Super Apex service of cut-price *haute cuisine*. With the economic crisis in France thinning their clientele, a score of top French restaurants joined the scheme two months ago. You can book only through Minitel, the on-line booking and information service operated by France Telecom. All the restaurants available have at least one star in the *Michelin Guide*. To eat at such a restaurant usually costs between 1,000 and 1,500 francs (£110 to £170) a head for a full à la carte dinner with wine.

Degristour offers the same thing, but with a set menu, for a maximum of £55 a head. We booked at Montparnasse 25, a Michelin one-star restaurant, where we had six courses for slightly less than £50 a head. Six courses sounds greedy but they were small, delicate courses – and all magnificent, though to my corrupted taste no more magnificent than those we ate



At your service: A waiter makes his way with a tray of oysters across the Brasserie Flo, in Paris

Photograph: Barry Lewis/Network

in our child-infested bedroom at the unstarred chateau. Food is such an elemental human need that the whole concept of an élite cuisine at refined prices is bound to raise moral

problems: how can you justify paying £170 a head for a meal when the same amount might feed a family for a month? In response, functional arguments are deployed: that by striving for

the best, the élite chefs keep up standards; that the best chefs are consulted by mass-food producers on how to improve their lines.

But the justification for *haute cuisine* has to be something

more amorously cultural. The pleasure of going to a place like Montparnasse 25 is an artistic pleasure. Like the highest art of any kind – great acting, great painting, great writing – the

pleasure of great cuisine is the pleasure of performance: witnessing something simple pushed to an evidently higher level, while maintaining, at its best, a kind of simplicity.

The concept of cooking as an art is a French invention and, like many things French at present, feels itself under threat from modernity. *Le Monde* this week bemoaned the fact that "social penury" was threatening French cuisine. "Substitute technologies, the banalisation of tastes, the changing behaviour patterns of the clientele," said the newspaper's food writer, Jean-Claude Ribaut, "favour the invasion of foreign approaches".

For which read McDonald's, which opened 100 restaurants in France last year; while a three-star restaurant went bankrupt for the first time and several one-star establishments closed. "Good food is the identity of a civilisation," Mr Ribaut asserted. The *Michelin Guide* was trying to force back the herds of barbarity, he said, but could, in the end, do no more than "uphold the memory of a golden age".

I think that maybe Jean-Claude protests too much: with 81 starred restaurants operating in Paris alone, the burger-barbarians have not yet laid France waste. I defy him to name anywhere in all 20 arrondissements, or all 96 départements, where you can get bacon, egg and chips.

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BUSINESS WE HAD TO OVERCOME  
NUMEROUS TECHNOLOGICAL HURDLES  
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## Black widow gets life term

Elizabeth Fullerton  
Reuters

Vienna — An Austrian court yesterday sentenced the "Black Widow" Elfriede Blauensteiner to life imprisonment for the murder of a pensioner in one of the most notorious trials in the country's history.

The court in Krems, 30 miles west of Vienna, found Blauensteiner, 66, guilty of poisoning Alois Pichler, 77, with fatal doses of medication. The jury reached its verdict at 3am after 12 hours of deliberation.

Blauensteiner, in a black suit and cream blouse, remained composed, muttering and looking at her watch impatiently as the verdict was read out. Asked if she understood the sentence she said with defiance: "I understand perfectly".

The jury said Blauensteiner's "pure greed" justified the heavy sentence, noting her "malicious actions did not give the victim any chance to defend himself".

Blauensteiner's former lawyer, Harald Schmidt, was sentenced to seven years in jail



Blauensteiner: Pure greed

for being an accomplice to grievous bodily harm and falsifying Pichler's will. The two have said they may appeal the verdict.

Although Blauensteiner was charged with only one murder, police are investigating other deaths. Blauensteiner is accused of placing advertisements in newspapers to meet rich, elderly men, poisoning her victims and then gambling away the money she was left in their wills.

Blauensteiner said she enjoyed nursing pensioners and it was a coincidence that some of her patients had died.

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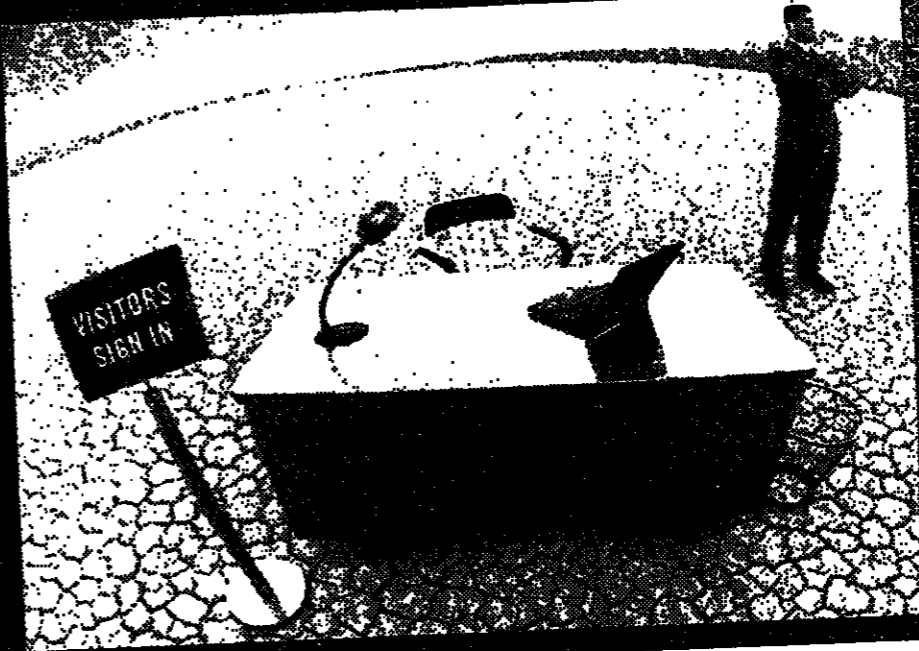
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## international

# America's welfare revolution leaves an army of single mothers confused

At Joy House, a Christian shelter for homeless women in downtown Milwaukee, Miliasia Gates, 28, is struggling to cope. Her one-year-old, Brandy, has hurled her bottle on the floor again and four-year-old Doris is starting to act up. Miliasia dispenses some instant discipline. She squirts a jet of milk formula into Doris's startled face before roughly thrusting the bottle back into the baby's grip.

"They shouldn't be going through this," Ms Gates sighs. Somewhere in the shelter's day area, amongst the sagging furniture and plastic bags bulging with personal belongings of dozens of families, hides her third and eldest child: "I wish I'd known it was going to be like this before I had all these kids".

Less than a mile away, in the city's new YWCA, Fanesa Davis is enjoying a rare moment of calm in the basement computer laboratory. While her children play in the gleaming nursery a few steps down the corridor, Fanesa, 31, is scrolling through software on qualifying to become a plumber.

Neither woman - one desperate, the other full of hope - could have imagined even a few months ago that on this March morning these would be their circumstances. Black and husbandless, both belong to the huge class of American single

**Radical reforms bring benefits but homelessness is soaring, writes David Osborne in Milwaukee**

tions, Britain included, are eager to see the consequences, as they are also searching for ways to ease the welfare burden.

A view of the post-welfare picture is already emerging. Recent months have witnessed an astonishing decline in American welfare rolls. Caseloads across the country have plunged almost 18 per cent since 1994. The drop is explained partly by a strong economy and an unemployment rate of 5.4 per cent. Also at play, however, are reforms that many of the states had already started to implement before the change was endorsed by the President.

No state is further ahead than Wisconsin and no city more gripped by the changes than Milwaukee. A new welfare regime much tougher than that envisaged in Mr Clinton's Bill, will take effect in September.

Called W-2, it will instantly remove from the rolls all single mothers who fail to do some kind of work, whether full-time commercial employment, or jobs in sheltered state-run workshops.

A slightly less rigorous transition scheme called Pay for Performance is already in place, which also demands something in return for benefits. If they do not work, welfare recipients must attend subsidised job training courses or face deductions from their payments.

Wisconsin and its Republican Governor, Tommy Thompson, have been hailed for taming the welfare monster. Its "success" is posited on some extraordinary state statistics. In four years, AFDC rolls have been reduced by 41 per cent and they are still shrinking. The goal is to improve people's lives by ending their dependency on state assistance. But, with evidence of a rapid rise in the number of homeless in Milwaukee, is that happening? What is absent from the strategy is any attempt to track families once they leave the rolls.

Joy House has seen a 110-per-cent increase in bed occupancy in 12 months. Miliasia Gates believes her case reveals the new system's cruelty. Her February assistance cheque was slashed from \$617 (£385) to \$212 (£132) as punishment, she says, for missing one job-search class. Evicted from her apartment, she had no choice but to come here. "I feel like that instead of helping you off [welfare

rolls], they hinder you, by cutting the money so much that you can't survive", she says.

Fanesa Davis, by contrast, is an example of what it is meant to happen. After six years on AFDC, she is dazzled by the possibilities opened up by her programme at the YWCA. "I have to be a role model to my kids," she says. "I don't want them looking at me and saying their mother's on welfare".

One of a handful of non-profit agencies contracted by the state to run job-training and job-search programmes, the YWCA is headed by Julie Taylor. "We know the opportunities are out there for them," she



Social insecurity: Sharon Jackson beds down with her children at the Milwaukee Joy House shelter for homeless women. Photograph: Chicago Tribune

insists. "A big part of what we try to do is make people believe that they can make the changes; many people feel they don't have any power themselves to make the changes in their lives."

Study the reform laboratory that is Wisconsin and two encouraging factors become clear. Many of the keenest reform advocates, such as Ms Taylor, are not of a radical conservative ilk.

Their motivation is a desire to improve lives, not save state money. Secondly, Wisconsin, in its efforts to smooth the transition, expects in the short term to spend more money on sup-

porting women like Fanesa and Miliasia, not less. The additional funding will broaden healthcare insurance, for instance, and childcare subsidies.

The city's Democrat mayor,

John Norquist, points out: "Going back to the old system of AFDC is not going to happen, because the electorate will no longer tolerate paying people for doing nothing."

**Instead of helping you off welfare, they cut the money so much that you can't survive**

mothers long sustained by a drip-feed of federal dollars from a six-decade-old programme known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, AFDC. But that is all changing.

AFDC, for years the largest component of America's welfare system, is headed for extinction. Last August, President Bill Clinton signed a welfare reform Bill that ends guaranteed aid for single mothers and requires states to begin attaching job conditions and time-limits to assistance. Every recipient will have to work within two years of signing; no one will get the benefits for more than five years in a lifetime.

It is a social experiment of monumental proportions that has triggered anguish among some liberals, who foresee thousands being tossed onto the streets. Many European na-

## US diplomats jockey for plum London posting

**Rupert Cornwell**  
Washington

The New York financier and Democratic party eminence Felix Rohatyn has joined the list to succeed William Crowe in the plum post of US ambassador to London, when the former Joint Chiefs chairman steps down this autumn.

Hitherto Mr Rohatyn, managing director of Lazard Freres in New York, had been considered a leading candidate to take over the Paris embassy, vacant after the death last month of Pamela Harriman. But he is now being canvassed for a post made especially sensitive by the near certainty of the first Labour government in two decades and the close US involvement in the search for a settlement in Northern Ireland.

The public front-runner remains Swanee Hunt, youngest daughter of the Texas oil tycoon, H.L. Hunt, and currently ambassador to Austria. Indeed, the 46-year-old Ms Hunt, a massive donor to President Clinton's 1992 campaign, is said to have "measured the drapes" during a recent stop-over at Winfield House, the ambassador's residence in London.

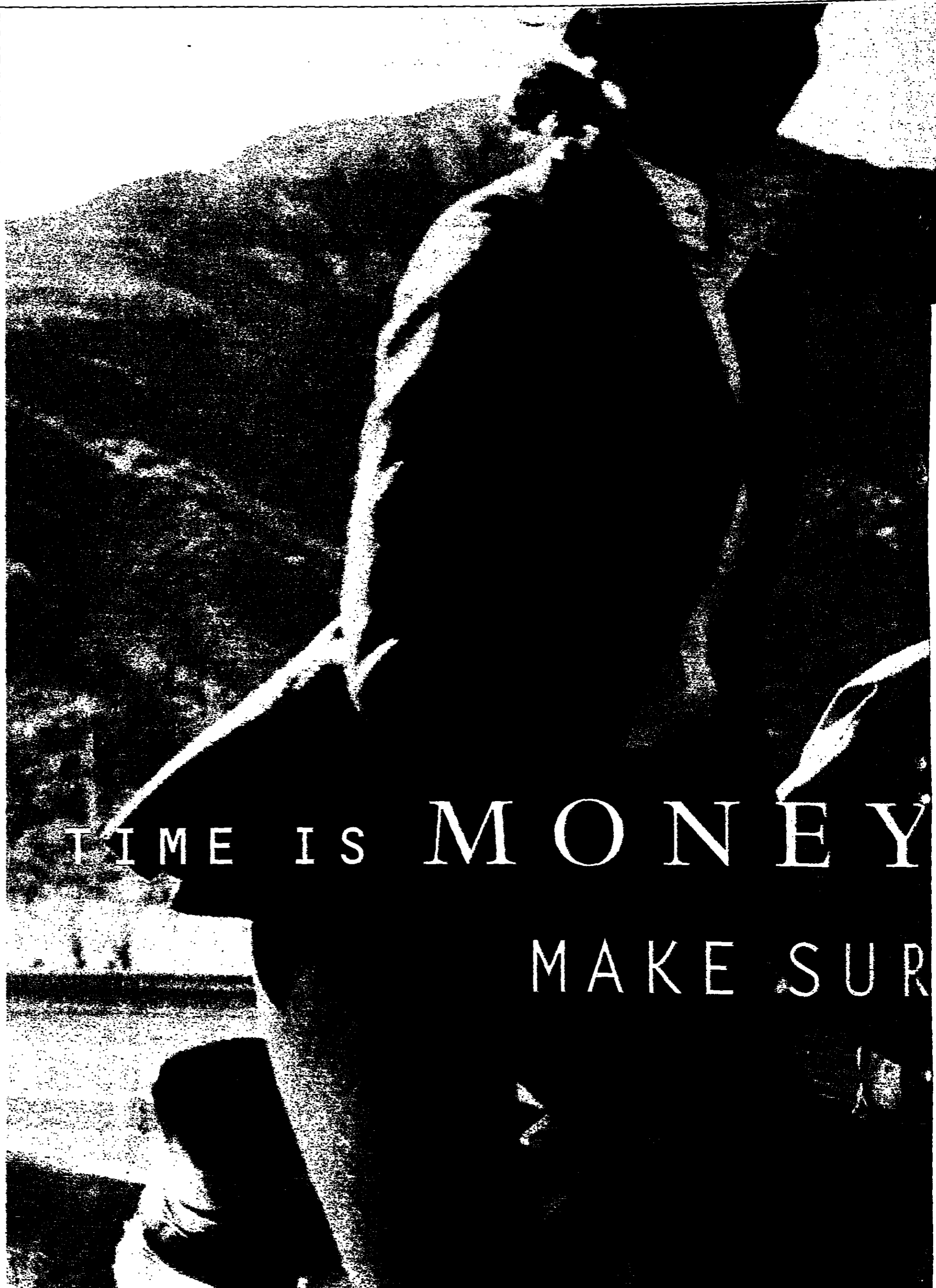
Ms Hunt, whose personal worth has been put at up to \$500m (£300m), has been a dynamic envoy in Vienna and is close to Madeleine Albright, the

new Secretary of State. But some question whether she has sufficient experience for the London post. Another non-diplomat mentioned for the job is Reed Hundt, currently head of the Federal Communications Commission here, and a friend of Mr Clinton from their Yale Law School days.

The London Ambassadorship is but one element in the traditional diplomatic reshuffle at the start of a new administration. John Kornblum, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian affairs in Mr Clinton's first term, is tipped for Bonn, while Frank Wisner, US Ambassador to Delhi, heads the list for Paris, should Mr Rohatyn go to London.

James Collins, a former US deputy chief of mission in Moscow and currently the State Department's top specialist on countries of the former Soviet union, is in line to return to Russia to succeed Thomas Pickering, who is returning as Undersecretary for Political Affairs, the third-ranking post at State.

In Tokyo, outgoing Ambassador Walter Mondale may be followed by the Democratic House Speaker, Tom Foley. In the past, the notably Anglophile Mr Foley has been tipped for London. But he would satisfy Japan's traditional preference that a prestigious ex-politician represent the US in its capital.



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# Belgian streets echo with the anger of a nation bitter at guardians of justice



Symbolic gesture: Renault workers from Vilvoorde carrying a chassis before throwing it over police barricades at the French embassy in Brussels Photograph: Reuters



## Industrial day of action shows solidarity with sacked Renault workers

Katherine Butler  
Vilvoorde, Belgium

A small group representing the 3,000 Renault workers whose jobs have just been axed emerged briefly yesterday from the giant car plant in Vilvoorde they have been occupying for a week now. They were taking flowers to the shrine at a Brussels petrol station where the body of a nine-year-old child was unearthed last Thursday morning.

The symbolic gesture linking the victims of the Renault crisis which has rocked Belgium and France, with the tragedy of Loubna Benaissa, the latest victim of Belgium's paedophile nightmare, was just one in an extraordinary day of solidarity which saw workers come out in sympathy throughout Belgium, but also in France and Spain.

Several hundred marched on the French embassy in Brussels, throwing the chassis of a Renault Megane over the gates, a protest at the failure of the French state which is part owner of Renault to prevent the closure, denounced by the Catholic Church in France yesterday as immoral. One-hour strikes were staged at Volvo, Volkswagen and Ford plants. Even showroom dealers closed their doors in honour of a pledge not to sell a single Renault car in Belgium yesterday.

Meanwhile, the family of Loubna Benaissa appealed for calm after angry protests and riots in the Ixelles district of Brussels amid mounting suspicions that Patrick Derochette, the convicted child abuser who has been charged with her murder, may have enjoyed police protection.

Events which are in substance unrelated appeared to come together yesterday, igniting a fresh wave of emotion in a country where public confidence in the political and judicial establishment could hardly be more fragile. The case of Loubna Benaissa is unconnected to the Dutroux paedophile gang but the discovery of her body four years after police closed her file has sparked outrage directed at an out-of-touch system which allowed a convicted child abuser to operate for years with impunity.

Industrial anger, meanwhile, is directed at a political class which seems just as out of touch with how millions of workers have to pay the price of cut-

throat competition. There is disbelief at the ease with which a highly profitable plant could be axed overnight and bitter resentment in Belgium that jobs there had to be sacrificed before those on Renault's home ground in France.

The European Commission said that Renault failed to respect European Union directives on worker consultation before announcing the closure. Brussels has also blocked Spain's attempts to subsidise Renault's modernisation of a plant in Valladolid and has promised a review of legislation on industrial relocation. But the commission's words did little to soothe the disenchantment with Europe at Vilvoorde.

"This is a catastrophe for us, and it proves that the social Europe does not exist, we have a social cemetery," said Gerard Verbeke who has been at Renault for 22 years and at 45 sees little prospect of finding another job.

"Europe is for capital, it is a Europe which does nothing for workers"

Europe which does nothing for workers," said Frank Stoffels a metal worker from Antwerp who had come to show support.

"What use is it to have European directives if Renault does not have to pay any penalties for breaking them?" Maximum penalties faced by Renault if it is found guilty of breaching EU law are around £400 000.

During the day hundreds of workers from other industries arrived to support the sit-in. "It might be our turn in a few months time" said Johan, a flight attendant with Sabena airline.

Union leaders say the sit-in will continue until they get reassurances that at least some of Renault's production will be retained at Vilvoorde. They expect management to try early next week to get out the 5,000 cars being held inside the factory. "If they get them out it will be over our dead bodies" one said.

## significant shorts

### Madrid infuriated by Basque killing acquittal

A San Sebastian jury acquitted a separatist, Mikel Otegi, on grounds he was not responsible for his actions when he killed two policemen. He said he had a blackout at the time of the shooting. The Interior Minister, Jaime Major Oreja, said it was a "risk" to hold jury trials in the Basque country and promised reforms to prevent the repetition of such a "nonsensical situation". Elizabeth Nash - Madrid

### Michael Manley dies

Michael Manley, prime minister of Jamaica 1972-1980 and 1989-1992, died of cancer, aged 72. He also led Third World causes, including liberation efforts in Africa. Reuters - Kingston  
Obituary, page 18

### Move to free Russian PoWs

Russian MPs voted to amnesty Chechens who took part in the secessionist war in an attempt to exchange Russian PoWs for Chechens in detention. Reuters - Moscow

### Paws for thought

Paw prints of tigers or leopards, believed to be extinct in the region, were found at Guilin, 1,000 miles from Peking, the first traces of big cats there in 30 years. AP - Peking

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# Michael Manley

After graduating, Manley

In opposition, Manley rebuilt his strength and his nerve and took stock of changing ideas about economic development. In 1988 he was again

When we negotiated collective agreements on pay and conditions we did so facing each other down the boardroom table. His shop stewards were ranged down one side, my

**Heroic:** Manley was 'Joshua'. He epitomised the anger of his people

Privately the Pope had encouraged efforts by local Catholics – as in Poland and Hungary – to protect as many Jews as possible. Graham noted that he had scoured the pages of the *New York Times* during the war and had found lit-

Arriving in Rome in 1966, Graham was to make the city his base for the next 30 years until

**Felix Corley**  
*Robert Andrew Graham, priest and historian: born Sacramento, California 11 March 1912; ordained priest 1941; died Los Gatos, California 11 February 1997.*

**Graham: 'Vatican 007':**  
**Photograph: CNS / Agostino Bono**

# Frank Brennan

**Brennan: a bulwark**  
Photograph: Hulton Getty

A strapping, raw-honed Scot with an engaging personality, he became an adoptive Geordie and a local cult hero, sharing the limelight with his even more famous team-mates, the centre-forward Jackie Milburn and left-winger Bobby Mitchell. Ma-

The turning point of Brennan's career arrived in 1946 when he played brilliantly for Scotland in a Victory interna-

Brennan made an instant impact in the English game, soon making his official international debut for Scotland (surely he would have won more than his seven caps but for the gifted Willie Woodburn of Glasgow Rangers), and was ever-

For the next few seasons Newcastle were a top side, always missing out on the League title but making ample amends with successive FA Cup triumphs, a glorious one against Blackpool in 1951 followed by a distinctly fortuitous victory over Arsenal a year later. Brennan played a key role in both, bottling up the effervescent Stan Mortensen in the first and holding firm against the gallant Gunners, who had been reduced to 10 men through injury, in the second. Thereafter he continued to be a bulwark of the

Now Brennan joined the non-League North Shields as player-coach, serving them enterprisingly for six seasons before spending five years as a

Frank Brennan will be remembered best for his prime in the black-and-white stripes of Newcastle United. Beyond rea-

**Ivan Ponting**  
*Frank Brennan, footballer, coach and manager: born Annathill, near Glasgow 23 April 1924; played for Airdrieonians 1941-46, Newcastle United 1946-56; capped seven times by Scotland 1946-54; manager, Darlington 1971-72; married (three sons, three daughters); died Newcastle upon Tyne 5 March 1987*

**Births,  
Marriages  
& Deaths**

**IN MEMORIAM**  
**CAVHURE:** Kundu. In loving memory of our dearest son, always in our hearts. Mum and Baba.  
**MANSFIELD:** Peter, died 9 March 1996. I love you. I miss you. I thank you for 35 years of perfect happiness. Now and always. Lure.

**Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS** should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). **OTHER** Gazette announcements (notices, forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra.

Ann Jenner, ballerina, 53; Miss Lynn Redgrave, actress, 54; Dr Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi, 49; Miss Lynn Seymour, ballerina, 50; Professor Stephen Smith, gynaecologist, 46; Professor Norman Stone, historian, 56; Mr Robert Tear, operatic tenor, 58; Mr John Ward MP, 72; Mr David Wilkie, swimmer, 43.

**TOMORROW:** Air Marshal Sir Roger Austin, Controller, Aircraft Ministry of Defence, 57; Mr Bill Beaumont, sports commentator, 45; Mr Andrew Bennett MP, 58; Dr Michael Bruce, former Warden, St George's House, Windsor Castle, 77; M André Courreges, couturier, 74; Sir Rowland Cumming-Bruce, former Lord of Appeal, 85; Mr Bobby

1962: the Suez Canal, a coal strike began in Britain, 1944: the United States landed 3,500 marines in South Vietnam, 1965: the Nelson Column in Dublin was destroyed by an IRA bomb, 1966, Today is the Feast Day of St Duthac, St Felix of Dunwich, St Humphrey or Hunfrid, St John of God, St Julian of Toledo, Saints Philemon and Appollinus, St Proculus

Erasmus and Apollonius, St Pontius of Carthage, St Senan of Scattery, St Stephen of Obazine and St Veremund. **TOMORROW:** Births: Amerigo Vesputici, explorer, 1454; Ernest Bevin, statesman, 1881; Victoria Mary Sackville-West, novelist, 1892; Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin, astronaut, 1934. Deaths: David Rizzio, secretary to Mary, Queen of Scots, murdered 1566; Arnold Toynbee, 100.

den of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, was the guest speaker. Professor Raoul Franklin, Vice-Chancellor, and Mrs Franklin, and Mr Robert W. Chappell, Chairman of Convocation, also attended.

**ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS**  
The Princess Royal, President, and the Children's Fund, today attends the West Midlands Agric at Gals Linnit and Bull International Convention Centre, Birmingham

**Changing of the Guard**  
TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment attends the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10m. 14 Hussars Royal Regiment of 'Ade' meets the Queen - Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.50m. and proceeds to the Grenadier Guards. TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment meets the Queen - Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am.

## A novelist dancing on banana-skins

*faith & reason*

was popular two generations ago. Hellenistic or de-Judaising Christianity was once widely and famously fashionable. It is now almost completely abandoned. For Paul, Jesus' death and resurrection made sense within the Jewish, not the pagan, world-view. The long-awaited outcome of the Jewish religious drama, the fulfilment of the

himself from the Gr to imply that Jesus' tion weren't literal t to give to those eve textured meaning. For all Wilson's li he insists on readi

Full, not to distance  
Messianic, nor  
death and resurrec-  
historical events, but  
their full, multi-  
erary sophistication,  
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agrees with them. The cultured despisers of Christianity assume they have the field to themselves. If the Church protests, Wilbur is frightened rabbits who are afraid of the facts. If the scholars object, they are trade-unionists protecting their shop. Who, then, would he be

[illegible]



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# There's no future in a Peter Pan society

We are the Peter Pan society. We are fixated with youth and give, as a culture, less and less to age and experience. But unlike the sentimental Victorians, whose "boy who would not grow up" was forever 10, our cultural clock stops at 16, or soon afterwards. The cult of youth infects all aspects of our lives, from fashion to politics. Throughout the media, there is more interest in the views of Swampy and the Spice Girls than in those of the old - who may be wise.

The so-called youth vote is considered a potent force, despite the fact that young people are more likely to be apathetic and irresponsible, and less likely to vote. Conversely, although older people are more interested, well read, better informed and much more likely to vote, "grey power" is surprisingly absent from British public life.

Yesterday, the three main party leaders gave their views to young journalists on the BBC's *Newsround*, the latest of several pre-election youth initiatives. Yet grilling by pensioners have hardly been a prominent part of the election warm-up. Even this week's debate about pensions was not about our responsibility to the present-day elderly, but about whether today's young people would end up paying more for their own old age.

Of course, this is an important issue. The main defect of the system of pension provi-

sion in this country, apart from its daunting complexity, is that today's people of working age are not persuaded or forced to save enough for their old age. Many do make adequate provision, but many of the less-well-off are going to be left behind.

However, it is curious how little attention is paid to the fate of the 10 million people who are already over 60. Roughly speaking, about one-third of them are reasonably well-off - indeed they include most of the very richest individuals in the country. But another one-third form the largest and most ignored section of the population living in poverty. They used to be a central concern of the Labour Party. But Tony Blair has said rather brutally of Labour's pledge at the last election to increase the basic state pension by £5 a week or £8 a week for couples, that it did not win his party a single extra vote. Unfortunately, this is broadly true - one of the explanations for politicians' lack of interest in wooing the grey vote is that it is much less volatile than others. Pensioners are not only better-informed about politics, but also more fixed (and often more Conservative) in their views. Their very loyalty allows party leaders to ignore them.

It is, nevertheless, not just a shame but a betrayal of trust between the generations that so many of the elderly have been treated so shabbily since the link between the state pen-



sion and average earnings was broken in 1980. This breached the implied contract under which a whole generation paid its National Insurance contributions - that they would share in the country's rising prosperity when they retired.

In fact, one of New Labour's least-noticed spending commitments is Harriet Harman's promise to make sure that the poorest pensioners get their full entitlement to social security benefits, which many are too proud to claim. Not only is this promise unpublished, it is also uncoded, and could mean spending an extra £1bn a year.

This is the least any government should feel obliged to do, and it is a pity that it came as a forced concession made under pressure from Barbara Castle last year. And indeed Lady Castle's passionate plea at the Blackpool conference was typical of the way in which we treat elderly politicians: she was idolised for five minutes and then politely voted down.

The cult of the Labour leader's youth does not help. Mr Blair is always "talkin' 'bout my generation". If you did not know that he would be the youngest prime minister since Lord Liverpool in 1812, he will soon let you know, talking about how, "to people of my generation", Marxist state control is old hat, or antagonistic industrial relations a distant memory. He comes dangerously close to

implying that old people have no place in his vision of Britain as a "Young Country".

But the impression he gives rings hollow. The more he talks of his youth, the more he sounds like someone trying to recapture something he has lost. And this turns out to be nostalgia for an era when we were unbarrassed by a sense of family obligation. Mr Blair invokes a thinly-modernised model of a society based on the extended family, where elders are treated with respect and younger people take responsibility for them in their old age. His rhetoric of community is based on the rights and duties we first learn in families.

And this past is not wholly lost, as an ESRC report to be published on Monday shows. Family bonds are still strong: people stay in touch with their extended families much more than is often supposed.

No one is in favour of restoring the Victorian patriarchy, but perhaps there is scope for a rebalancing of our culture, for a little more honouring of fathers and (don't forget tomorrow) mothers. Not to mention grandparents, uncles, aunts and the rest. And let us not forget our pensioners in the coming election campaign.

And by that, we mean listening to them, not merely paying them. Age doesn't necessarily bring wisdom, but experience often does. A Peter Pan society is also a childish one.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Beware the Tory MP and his racist gaffe - or was it?

Sir: Far from being a buffoon, David Evans MP is likely a sharp, if repugnant operator. Offensive and ugly racist language became the stock-in-trade of right-wingers in the Australian election campaign a year ago - and far from unsuccessful.

Polly Toynbee's point ("A glimpse at the dark heart of Toryism", 6 March) about "political correctness" - by any standards a slippery concept - is nicely made. It has indeed become the ideal sop for right-wing commentators, used to fend off on any demand for intellectual exertion. With Evans in mind, is "political correctness" not just the politically correct term for civility and good-manners?

I have no doubt that we shall hear more boorish and inflammatory outbursts in the coming campaign; but I think twice before labelling them ill-judged or naive.

Dr NANO GREWAL  
Oriel College, Oxford

Sir: Polly Toynbee is right that those who claim to deplore the language of equality actually deplore the idea of equality, but she makes only a vague allusion to the principles of modern linguistics which underpin her argument.

According to Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralist theory of

linguistics, the way people use words is indivisible from their meaning. There cannot be a difference in form without a difference in meaning.

The English language is less susceptible to inherently sexist usage than those languages which have a gender system, but it does have a colourful and varied range of derogatory terms for women and foreigners, as Ms Toynbee mentioned: "wogs", "bimbos", "tarts", "nig-nogs" and so on. There are far more ways to insult a woman or a foreigner than there are to insult a white male.

ALEXANDER HOFMANN  
(A white male)  
St Andrews, Fife

Sir: Polly Toynbee doesn't cast her net widely enough. Opinions like those of David Evans MP are, sadly, by no means restricted to Tories and taxi-drivers. Think of all these Labour voters in Northern workingmen's clubs guffawing along with Bernard Manning.

Evans, Manning and John Carlisle's taxi driver represent a resentful backlash against the progressive changes of the last 30 years. Their values have been superseded by better ones, and they don't like it.

JAMES SCOTT  
Great Linford, Buckinghamshire

Sir: I take exception to the final paragraph of Polly Toynbee's article. There are over 1,300 Conservative Clubs, more than twice the number of any other type of political club. I have never been to a Conservative Club which is "full of old, sour, mean, white faces".

Polly Toynbee has shown that she is just as capable of making "politically incorrect" sweeping generalisation as those she sought to deride.

KEN HARGREAVES  
Secretary, The Association of Conservative Clubs Ltd  
London SW1

Sir: Racism and sexism, which are different forms of xenophobia, share a common thought process: the definition of a group to which the practitioner does not belong, the attribution to that group of unpleasant characteristics and the willingness to punish all supposed members of the group on the assumption that they possess those characteristics.

Polly Toynbee is not exempt from xenophobic reasoning. She contemptuously attributes a "marmalade of disgraceful attitudes" to all us Conservative voters. We represent somewhere between a third and half of her fellow-citizens, yet I feel that if she could she would

abolish the lot of us. We do disagree with many of her prescriptions for improving economic and social conditions, but if our analysis is different our motives are no baser than hers.

COLIN ANGIN  
London W8

Sir: What has Luton done to offend Polly Toynbee? We may have John Carlisle as MP for the north of the town (though many thought him MP for white Johannesburg) and Graham Bright as MP for the south but, thank God, we don't have to suffer David Evans, who is MP for Welwyn Hatfield.

He did, as chairman, preside in our football team's slide from the old first division to the present second (or the old third) but this is the limit of his malign influence on the town. Equally, pray God, the influence of Messrs Bright and Carlisle will be lifted in a few weeks.

PHILIP JONES  
Luton, Bedfordshire

Sir: Every so often my husband will rise from the breakfast table muttering forcefully, "You tell 'em, Polly. Well said. You tell 'em." This morning (6 March) was no exception. What on earth is going on?

FELICITY MARRIAN  
London SW3

### Smokers always knew the risks

Sir: I don't smoke; I've never smoked. And the reason is that when I was about eight, my mother, who did smoke very heavily, showed me the "tissue test". In this she blew uninhaled cigarette smoke through a tissue as compared to inhaled smoke. She showed me the brown mark from the uninhaled smoke, and explained forcefully that every time she drew smoke into her lungs, that "beastly stuff" stayed there. "My lungs," she said, "are like sponges soaked with disgusting tar."

This was not in the Sixties or Seventies. It was in the Forties or Fifties. It was in the Thirties. And my mother, and all her generation, knew perfectly well what they were doing to themselves. How else did they explain their "smokers' coughs"? Why else did they offer each other "coffin-nails"?

I hate to come to the aid of the tobacco industry, but fair's fair. It is utter nonsense for what you laughably call "early smokers" to claim they didn't know that smoking damaged their health (report, 6 March). King James I knew how bad tobacco was for you when it first hit these shores.

If the tobacco companies were not so busy trying to pretend that smoking is not dangerous, and called upon old smokers or old people whose parents smoked to give evidence that it was well-known that smoking damaged your health and was related to fatal illness, they would have a better case for seeing off those who claim they followed fashion in the Forties and Fifties without knowing the dangers.

LYNN REID BAKES  
Bournemouth, Dorset

### Bishop tried to bring peace to parish

Sir: John Walsh distorts events in the article "Another sting in the tale of the city of scorpions" (4 March) that the Bishop of Birmingham and his senior staff have for some time been deeply involved in trying to restore a proper working relationship between the Rev Eve Pitts and the rest of the clergy team with whom she is meant to be working. It was only when all else had failed that the Bishop coupled a request for Mrs Pitts to resign with the offer to continue to find her other work as a priest. To describe the Bishop's actions as insensitive and to couple the piece with the announcement of his engagement was unworthy.

SUE PRIMER  
Bishop's Press Officer  
Diocese of Birmingham

### Jerusalem ballot box free of scorpions

Sir: Patrick Cockburn claims in his article "Another sting in the tale of the city of scorpions" (4 March) that the Jewish majority in Jerusalem is artificial. He points out that towns such as Bethlehem and Ramallah are deliberately not included by Israel in the city's boundaries, because of the high numbers of Palestinians that live in these areas.

Those towns have never been seen, and still are not, seen, as part of the city of Jerusalem either by the Jews nor by the Palestinians living in the area. It is true that Palestinian neighbourhoods such as Abu-Dhis, which are not included in the boundaries of the city, are effectively a part of it, but the Palestinian population in these areas is not significant enough anyway to change the fact that a Jewish majority does exist today in the city.

ERAN PEELEG  
Pembroke College, Oxford

## LETTER from THE EDITOR

Reader suggestion of the week comes from John Omerod of Bury St Edmunds who complains about the phrase "Anthony (now Lord) Barber" and switches between Lord and Roy Jenkins. He writes: "Could you consider becoming the first newspaper to drop titles altogether? (I believe the *New Scientist* has done so). Do away with Lords, Ladies, Masters, Mrs and Misses, doctors, professors and all, using them only when needed for identification. Strike a blow for equality!"

It is an intriguing idea. What, I wonder, do readers think? Would you resent a missing piece of information - for instance that X was a peer, or Y an archbishop - or would you prefer the newspaper to be a democratically flattened meeting place, at least as far as titles, honours and other handles go? Most views welcome - though perhaps, on this occasion, it would be fair if members of the Royal Family and Highland clan leaders refrained from taking part.

The most interesting party of the week turns out to be Tribune's 60th birthday bash at Brown's restaurant in London. New Labour, sleek and brimming with confidence, rubs padded shoulders with dishevelled veterans from the Campaign for Real Socialism, flord trade unionists and the flotsam of radical hackery. Surging Labour optimism about their chances in the election and, not far behind that in importance, a free bar, help ensure general bonhomie.

But tension is just below the surface. For instance, a discussion among hard-edged and earnest Blairites about the need for radical changes to pensions, not so different from Peter Lilley's proposals, is broken short by a characteristic display of operatic from Barbara Castle. She and Michael Foot are the "Gog and Magog of Old Labour". Some elements of the party, she warns, have been trying to exorcise the two of them for years. "They will not succeed," roars the Red and profoundly octogenarian Baroness. And Lilley's proposals on pensions? If the Labour movement doesn't supper this kind of thing "It is - DEAD!" Just

Andrew Marr

### QUOTE UNQUOTE

Well she's a single girl, lives with her boyfriend, three bastard children, lives in Cambridge, never does a proper job. People have to make their mind up - David Evans, Tory MP, on his Labour opponent in the general election, Melanie Johnson

After due consideration, I regret some of the things I said and I apologise to the Prime Minister and to others for any embarrassment or offence which may have been caused - David Evans, Tory MP

Ramsay MacDonald sat me on his knee and I've looked at Labour leaders in a funny way ever since - Tony Benn, Labour MP

I don't think I experienced many Labour MPs being as greedy as the Tories were. And, being a Tory, it hurts me to say that - Ian Greer, lobbyist

I can pull him back as though he were on one of those dog leads - Jane Clark, wife of former Tory minister Alan Clark

I find dimness interesting. I often wonder what it's like not to be an intellectual - Anne Haverly, novelist

To forbid all human cloning now might also halt a whole new branch of medicine before it begins - Steve Jones, professor of genetics at University College, London

The war destroyed the demand for garden gnomes and birdbaths - Terry Major-Ball, the Prime Minister's brother

### Pension reform will pay for itself

Sir: You are wrong to say that the Government's new pension plan would make youngsters "pay twice" - once to fund their own pensions, and again to pay for the rest of us (Business comment, 6 March). In fact, switching from the state's chain-letter pension scheme to a properly funded system gives a vast boost to economic growth that makes the transition pay for itself.

People regard National Insurance as a tax - indeed, a tax on jobs. So people are less willing to do a job, and employers less willing to create them. But if the money is going into their own personal growth fund instead of into the Government's coffers, the incentives are reversed.

The state scheme is a financial fraud, paying a return below 2 per cent on what the average married man contributes. Singles and those above the average often get negative returns - they would be better off keeping their National Insurance contributions under the mattress. The state scheme leaves people

with less money available to save for themselves. Replacing it with a funded system means a rush of new investment into British industry, generating new economic growth.

Professor Martin Feldstein of Harvard University calculates the benefit of changing from a pay-as-you-go to a funded system in America at 3 per cent of GNP each year - doubling economic growth. It would take an economic gain of less than a tenth of that for the Government's new scheme to pay for itself, without anyone at all having to "pay twice".

Dr EAMONN BUTLER  
Director  
Adam Smith Institute  
London SW1

Sir: If I am paying for my parents' pension and my son will, when he gets a job, be paying for his own pension, who will pay for my pension?

PETER EMMETT  
Folkestone, Kent

### Profitable future for terrestrial TV

Sir: Rob Brown ("Two-brains" Elstein caught in two minds", 3 March) seems not quite to have followed what I said on *South Bank Live*. The audience share of the US networks has indeed declined: but their revenue, value and investment in programming have all risen more steeply. I made that argument consistently through my years at Sky: the new media will erode terrestrial audiences, but barely affect their revenues. I say exactly the same now now I am at Channel 5.

Rupert Murdoch runs a successful twin terrestrial/satellite strategy in the US on precisely this basis. There is no contradiction involved.

Far from Channel 5 having "an abysmally low budget", it will have three times the spending power of Sky One, which wins a 5 per cent share in satellite homes against 40 competitors. In three-quarters of the homes receiving it, Channel 5 will face just four competitors.

DAVID ELSTEIN  
Chief Executive  
Channel 5 Broadcasting Ltd  
London WC2

### Fur farms: better to be partly right

Sir: Richard North's article on the farming of mink for their fur (6 March) quotes Dr Georgia Mason of Oxford University, who says that mink is probably the best example of factory farming and the least cause for concern. Mr. North's conclusion is that buying fur is probably less immoral than buying battery eggs. This may be true but it is still a rather weak defence of fur farming.

The sad reality is that animals are exploited in many different ways for food, clothing, entertainment and experimentation. Oppose it all and you will be labelled an extremist; oppose only some of it and you will be accused of hypocrisy.

It is inconsistent to oppose fur but not battery eggs, but at least in doing so, one will be demonstrating some compassion. I would rather be inconsistently right than consistently wrong.

RICHARD MOUNTFORD  
Birmingham



Peering on parade: red robes fill the Lords chamber at the State Opening of Parliament Photograph: PA

### Blair's packed House no gain for democracy

Sir: Have I got this right? According to Fran Abrams ("Blair's lords-leaping ready to bring down the house", 5 March), to make the House of Lords more democratic the plan is to replace those Lords who are there simply because their ancestors did a favour for Charles II, Gladstone or whoever with people who have done a favour for Tony Blair.

Whilst the peers to be replaced are now not beholden to anybody and may vote in the way they feel is in the national interest, one of the requirements of their replacements is that they will vote for whatever Tony Blair tells them to.

It might remove the inbuilt Tory

majority, but it is hardly a move in the direction of a more democratic Britain.

MARTIN OAKES  
Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire

Sir: In your leading article of 6 March you raise the questions of the composition of the second chamber and the authority of local government. It should surely be a matter for discussion that the second chamber should contain, as a major element, representatives of the elected bodies in the next lower local tier, at present county councils.

Sir JOHN GRAY FRs  
Kingsland, Cornwall

## the saturday story

## Just what is fashion for....?

... apart from employing supermodels and making people rich? For a start, it's sewn into the very fabric of our everyday lives; after all, we all wear clothes. But fashion's brief goes far beyond mere function. By Peter Popham

**M**y 17-year-old son has no income, and he spends every last penny of it on his clothes. He spent £40 recently on a cotton jumper emblazoned with the logo from *Planet of the Apes* and the word FUCT. His white, suede Vans boots, with thick rubber soles and the crucial brand name inscribed on the tip of the toe, set him back £60. Today, he will go to Camden Market and buy the thin brown woollen item he has set his heart on which hangs down below his waist and has the word Blunt printed in orange on the nipple inside a blue oval frame. It will cost him £35.

I don't understand it. I don't know what it's all about. Occasionally, something he buys hits you in the face – those orange combat trousers he wore last summer coming back from

Glastonbury, but most of the time, it's just dimly mystifying – all these non-descript mass-produced garments with their cryptic, half-joke brand names. But I understand that it matters. He thinks about his choices for weeks. He broods. He even saves. He's doing something important, he's creating himself or some sort of carapace, he's building an identity with his Blunts and Vans and FUCTs.

We are in the midst of the spring shows – London and Milan behind us, Paris and New York yet to come – and fashion is all around us. It's the same every year, but it's gone to a new extreme in Britain now. London Fashion Week, which finished a week ago, had a vastly higher profile than in previous years. The grande dame of punk, Vivienne Westwood, was lured back after eight years away, and Prada, the hottest fashion house in the

world these past three years, dropped in for the first time, and threw the week's best party. Media coverage had been so enormous that fashion editors on the broadsheets began to fear overkill, and started pacing themselves. Milan, accordingly, has passed practically unnoticed. But next week, when the fashion world regroups under the Louvre's glass pyramid, it will start all over again.

When fashion comes at you at the familiar pace – one silly snap, one sexy one, one new sensation, one veteran making a comeback – it's part of the everyday static; we take it or leave it. But when, as now, it comes at you in a big scrimmage of hype and money and headlines and national destiny, you have at some point to sit up and ask – what is it all about? What is fashion for?

On one level, the question is easily answered. Fashion is big

business; it is our fourth largest industry, according to Andy de la Haye, curator of the Victoria and Albert Museum's big new exhibition, *The Cutting Edge: 50 Years of British Fashion*, which opened last week. So the fashion shows are merely trade shows. The frocks are just wigs that happen to be pretty enough to make the front pages. The wheels of commerce revolve, the human cogs do their stuff.

But this explanation leaves all the important questions begging. Why are the V&A's costume galleries by far the most popular in the museum? Why did more than 100,000 people stream through their *Street Style* exhibition two years ago? What sort of role does fashion play in our society?

Fashion's big strength is its unique combination of universality and instantaneity. We may be one deaf, we may shut out newspapers and television and radio, but all of us put something on in the morning. Nearly all of us also enter into casual relations at some point, and in the process notice, if only minimally, as we rip them off, what others are wearing. We all wear clothes, and we all have views about the clothes that others wear. Clothes are the most inti-

mate form of self-expression, and the only compulsory one. The message they convey may only be apathy, slovenliness and self-loathing, but it comes across with horrible clarity.

And we can change the message in the time it takes to undress and dress again. In that fleeting interlude, we can re-create ourselves. This is fun for teenagers and confusing for parents, but what it can mean for an entire society is demonstrated by the Imperial War Museum's exhibition *Forties Fashions and the Christian Dior New Look*.

**W**hen Britain was faced in September 1939 with imminent invasion and national catastrophe, the propaganda potential of clothes quickly became apparent. As a universal medium for expressing communal solidarity and identity, they had a wonderful expressive versatility. British wit and pragmatism was expressed in the hats that glowed in the dark for wearing during blackouts. Class divisions were temporarily abolished as top designers turned out "utility" clothing for the masses, using the minimum possible amount of fabric. A range of scarves was produced, covered in patriotic and exhortatory

catchphrases – "Is your journey really necessary?" "Keep it under your hat." "We shall not flag or fail – we shall go on to the end." There was a dressing gown covered with maps of Britain and dotted with stirring slogans "This demi-paradise" etc. – from Shakespeare.

But most eloquent of all was undoubtedly the siren suit, which became as recognisable a trade mark of Churchill as the big cigar. The one on display here is made of maroon velvet, expressing in a single garment urgency, commonsense and insouciant dandyism.

What the exhibition well conveys is that at moments of national crisis, fashion is a very big gun in the national armoury – because it touches everybody. Fifty years on, fashion still carries a terrific voltage, but its function in society is drastically different.

The catwalk show is fashion's defining ritual. Fashion may, as some believe, be the rock 'n' roll of the late 90s, but the fashion show is nothing like a rock 'n' roll concert. It may have the background music; it may have the improbably or grotesque or out of the way location beloved of performance or installation artists. It may require the same sort of intense concentra-

tion as a concert of modern music. But in all essentials, it is like none of these.

Unlike all of the above, a fashion show usually happens just once. It is highly exclusive; witness the scenes of rampaging madness outside Alexander McQueen's show in the Borough fruit and vegetable market last Friday as hundreds tried and failed to crash the gates.

Once admitted, you discover that seating is allocated in accordance with the strictest hierarchy: glossy magazine editors together, broadsheet fashion writers together, buyers together on the other side of the catwalk, foreign journalists together at the end.

Once seated, you wait and wait: most of last week's London shows started abysmally late, some an hour or more later than scheduled. But once the thing finally gets going, it's all over in the blink of an eye. McQueen showed 100 outfits worn by some 30 models in 15 minutes. In that time, the buyers and the journalists had to absorb all the weird outfits flashing past their eyes, log their distinctive features and reach judgments about them. It's a task that requires huge amounts of knowledge and experience and

great powers of concentration, and it confirms the privileged few in their pride of caste.

The excitement at a top fashion show when the designer is really on form has nothing artificial about it. For these are highly geared occasions, on which a great deal depends: from this concentrated 80 minutes of spectacle, a whole cascade of judgements and decisions tumbles down through press and TV and corporate decision making which, if positive, can transform the way the nation dresses over the months and years ahead. Alternatively, it can flop as totally as Flynn by Channan's show in London last week, where no-one bought anything. It's no wonder that the adrenaline flows, and the buzz becomes addictive.

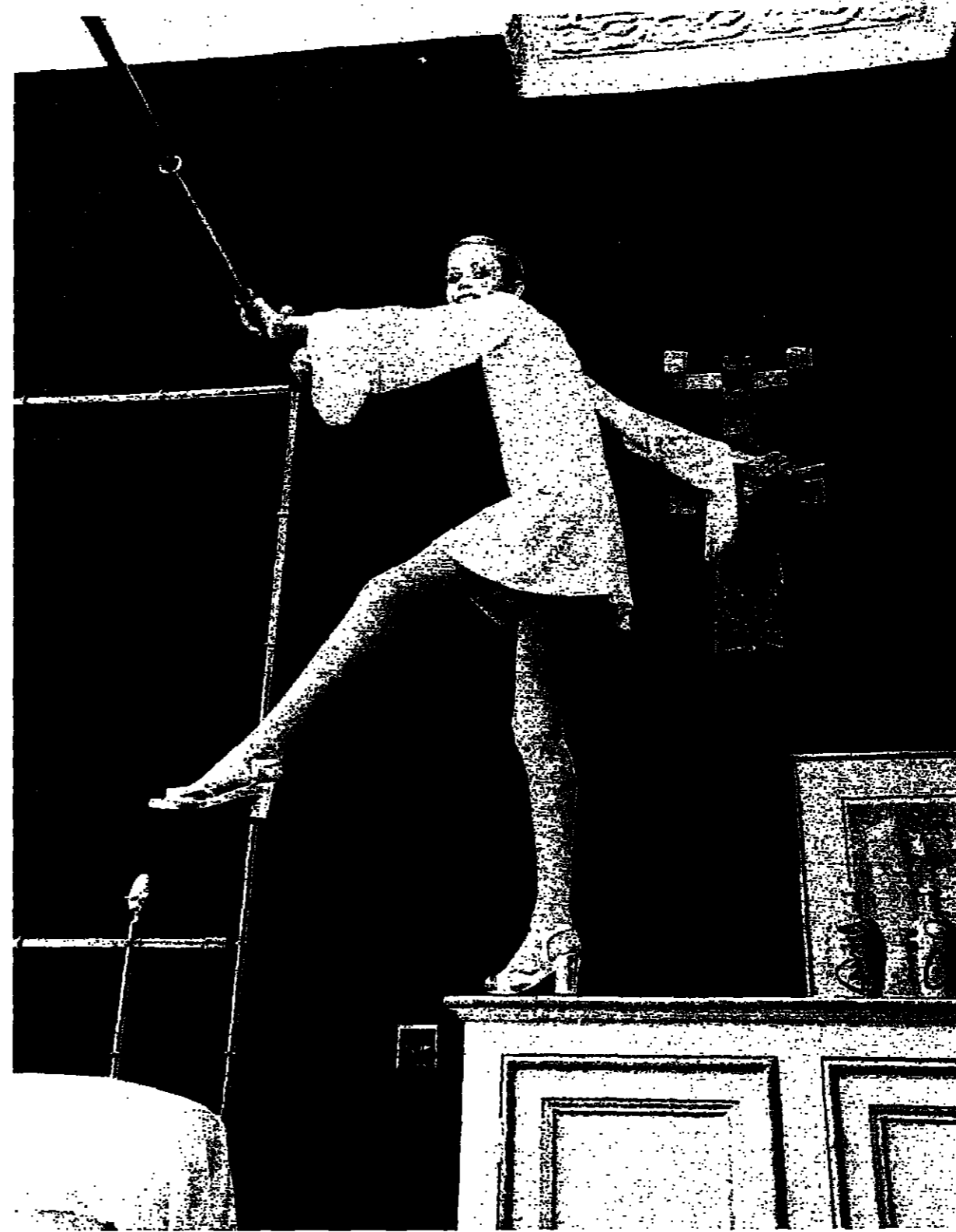
In the midst of our flattened, secularised, anti-hierarchical society, the fashion business represents the emergence of a caste of lay priests with powers that within their narrow domain are enormous. Their task is to tell the public what it wants, and simultaneously to make it clear how hard it is going to be for them to get it.

In his book *The Philosophy of Money* (1978), Georg Simmel wrote "We call those objects valuable that resist our desire to possess them." Fashion is a highly sophisticated system of rationing. Without the whole panoply of Fashion Weeks, the crowds of wannabes rattling the gates, the cameras, the lights, the delays, the almost tangible glamour, what would you have left? Racks and racks of clothes, more or less stupid or witty or charming, but all fatally lacking the magic ingredient that the business imbues the best of them with – impossibility.

*The Cutting Edge*, the new exhibition at the V&A, celebrates 50 years of British fashion, from Norman Hartnell to McQueen and from Burberry to Zandra Rhodes. Elegantly staged in a high, salon-like space, it brilliantly complements the *Street Style* show. British fashion comes out of it looking in excellent shape.

But it leaves one aware that only half the story is being told. Here are the clothes, close enough to touch. One can look at them for as long as one likes: admire the tailoring, the fabrics, the play of forms and ideas. But what is missing is all the fizz and hype that surrounded them when they first entered our consciousness, all the froth and nonsense that forced us to pay attention to these kipper ties and miniskirts and Tommy Nutter suits in the first place, and set them on a high shelf of desirability.

Here they are, drained of mystique. One result is that many of the clothes don't look half as stupid and dated as one would expect. But equally they are short of their desirability. They simply hang there, inscrutably.



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## jo brand's week

First of all, a big thank-you to my mum for letting me have a week's holiday in Spain without worrying about the column. I spent most of the week in Madrid and a couple of days in Toledo, the sword-making capital of Spain, for what that news is worth.

One thing I did like about inland Spain, which applies to many countries in Europe with different drinking laws from us, is that there seems to be very little of the desperate laddish drunkenness you get over here, when it suddenly strikes the boys that the pub is going to close in 10 minutes and they'd better get them in big-time. This results in a rush of alcohol to brains and the neanderthal behaviour we witness regularly at weekends. In fact, the only episode of staggering, blind drunkenness I witnessed the entire time I was there started a well-known British film director – my lips are sealed. Obviously, it's a different story on the coast of Spain, but I think you'll find again that that's our mob again.

Having just enjoyed about the relative sobriety of Spanish drinkers, I would like to relate an incident which detracts somewhat

from what I have just said, but was executed with some panache. Scene: a late-night bar serving hot chocolate textured like wet concrete. Protagonists: A man dressed as a clown flogging roses to lovers and a middle-aged man in a smart suit. A friendly discussion between these two took about three minutes to turn into a shouting match during which the clown tried desperately to lift the tension by making funny noises and squeezing his nose. The man in the suit smashed a rose to pieces on the bar and looked as if he was going to floor the clown. Result: very big barman grabbed besuited drunk by scruff of neck and did a real Wild West saloon kick up the jackie, propelling man out of door. Clown was shaken, and may now think twice about his selling technique.

Road rage is alive and well in Germany, as experienced by my brother this week. Having suffered the tailgating, headlight-flashing attentions of a very flash Merc on the *Autobahn*, he pulled over to let it pass, only to draw up behind it in a traffic jam. At this point, two blokes jumped out, ran to my brother's car

and opened the door. One took a swing at him, nearly planting a real scorcher right on his nose. Who were these guys? Neo-nazis? Yobbo lads? No, they were two very respectable-looking men in their late 40s in suits. This could be the year of the middle-aged man frenzy.

I hope that a season of plays at the Battersea Arts Centre directed by four theatre critics may open the floodgates for all critics of the arts to get as good as they give for a change. All performers have, at one time or another, been given what they consider to be a vicious, personal review which has nothing to do with the performance they gave. I call upon Garry Bushell, that Levin woman from the Mail

and Sunday and several others too numerous and revolting to mention to pop down to the Comedy Store late show and give me 10 minutes of their best jokes. Oh, what joy that would be.

David Evans seems to be a bit of a gift for the Labour Party, and although his views are outrageous to the point of being funny, it makes me wonder how someone like Mr Evans has got as far as he has without his constituents booting him out well before now. Some unfortunate group of people are represented in Parliament by this buffoon, and the more one sees of these right-wing MPs, the more one despairs for the human race. One thing that should be borne in mind is that Mr Evans made his

money from providing cleaning services to the NHS, which everyone knows accepts the cheapest deal going to save dosh. Sounds like a template for the rest of government policy.

Mr Evans has at least said he is sorry to Virginia Bottomley for his "dead from the neck up" comment and she has accepted his "gallant and elegant" apology. So she is dead from the neck up, then.

Another motor-mouth's wrath on the airwaves has met with severe disapproval. Danny Baker's strong opinions have proved a bit too much for Radio Five, who have given him the heave-ho. I would say that Danny Baker has proved to be more than a match for the people who phone in to his programme, who, by the very act of picking up the receiver, prove that they hold strong opinions themselves. This is blokes-arguing-in-the-pub territory, and where sport, politics or religion are involved, it is going to get out of hand. At least Danny Baker does not tend to express racist opinions in front of schoolchildren. No, we leave that to our politicians.

## Low church

Is George Carey out of favour because he's into tambourines and singing?

david aaronovitch



A bad week for the Government: an awful week for the Church of England. First, the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, has not been asked to officiate at the confirmation of 14-year-old Prince William tomorrow. And then, the church's new Easter campaign - which was to use the logo of the X-Files, the "cult TV hit" (newspaper talk for very popular television series), plus an adapted slogan, "The Truth Is Here" - has had to be ditched for reasons of copyright. All of which further justifies - does it not? - the growing criticism of England's established church as bumbling, ineffectual and uncertain.

The Prince and Princess of Wales don't care for Carey. They have given the confirming job to the Bishop of London, the bearded Rt Rev Richard Chartres - an opponent of the ordination of women (too many breasts, apparently) - and a believer in the need to rediscover the power of prayer and worship. This is ecclesiastical code for not doing too much to encourage gays or women. There is no record of what Prince William thinks of this choice. Indeed, we have no idea what Prince William believes. He may even be a secret Satanist.

But what extraordinary sin has joined the Waleses together in animosity towards the Archbishop? After all, what God has sent aside for no man reunites. Is it because Carey is into tambourines and singing? Because he calls the Queen Mum "dear"? Because he lacks the pallor of the Oxford library, or the manners of High Table?

Poor George. Even his name is against him. Was there, in *Snow White*, an eighth spiritual dwarf? In line behind Doc, Bashful, Happy, Sleepy, Grumpy, Dopey and Sneezy, may we find Carey, the compassionate, slightly vague dwarf? Poor George, whose fate is to be praised by William Rees-Mogg as possessing a "personality with a steady rather than a dramatic pulling power", who is (in Rees-Mogg's view) an "Aunt Ethel" Archbishop.

Is it all his fault, or the sorry pass arrived at by the church he leads? It is, after all, a "broad church". But what kind of a religious

lying call is this? Come on in - everybody is welcome! But how much more attractive is a creed that says, "Come in, you're one of the fortunate few - all the others are going to burn!"

And what can you do with a church where all the most intelligent people spend much of their time disputing its own tenets? Several Bishops believe that the Book of Revelations is "pretty pathological", that the virgin birth is nonsense, that the resurrection is a myth. The more theology gets discussed in the Church of England, the less religious people become.

How can you feel flame in your heart for an institution whose greatest disputes involve columnists from the *Daily Telegraph* accusing bishops (as one did this week) of being in a "terrible state of inconsistency"? "You have come before this Holy Court charged with the monstrous and unnatural crime of inconsistency. Before the monks set flame to the faggots, have you anything to say?"

When they are not launching ill-fated trendy campaigns, cosying up to gays, re-stringing their acoustic guitars and questioning the faith, they are to be found in territorial disputes that make Barchester Towers look like the Koran. Take Lincoln, where the Bishop won't play in his own cathedral because of a vicious dispute between a Dean and a Canon. What a mess!

And thank God for it. Thank God that it is so uncertain, inconsistent, mixed and muddled; that it has absorbed the energies and spiritual feelings of the religious among us. That there are no miracles. No shrouds. No milky statues. No smiling. No purges. No fiery crosses. No inquisitions. No flagellation. No dipping Jews or burning heretics. No such thing as heresy. No crusades. No bloody processions. No Church Militant.

Instead we have the Heritage Church. We have the fund for the upkeep of the church spire, Clarry's turn to do the flowers, "that was a lovely service, vicar", Hymn 147, the parish newsletter, prayers for the poor, prayers for the Prince of Wales.

The churches are full in Croatia and the mosques are packed in Tehran.

The admirable Dolly the sheep must have felt her cloned ears burning this week. She has seldom been off the air, seldom far from the Comment columns, the Leader pages or the Letters to the Editor.

What has intrigued me is the process by which invited contributors to the broadcast debates on such delicate matters are chosen. Some of them are experts in the field, as you would expect and as is right and proper. Others are distinguished scholars of moral or legal philosophy, which is equally appropriate.

Both these categories of person have been invited in their own right, because of their expert knowledge or their proven ability to think intelligently and express themselves clearly. The arguments they have with each other are usually illuminating and rewarding.

But there is another category of obligatory guest. There is the inevitable "representative" of the so-and-so "community"; and, of course, we mustn't forget the "voice" from the such-and-such "tradition". Not to mince words, the religious lobby. Lobbies in the plural, I should say, because all the religions have their point of view, and they all have to be represented lest their respective "communities" feel slighted.

This has the incidental effect of multiplying the sheer number of people in the studio, with consequent consumption, if not waste, of time. It also, I believe, often has the effect of lowering the level of expertise and intelligence. This is only to be expected, given that these spokesmen are chosen not because of their own qualifications in the field, or as thinkers, but simply because they represent a particular section of the community.

Out of good manners I shall not mention names, but this week I have experienced public discussions of cloning with several prominent religious leaders, and it has not been edifying. One of the most eminent of these spokesmen, recently elevated to the House of Lords, got off to a flying start by refusing to shake hands with the women in the studio, apparently for fear that they might be menstruating or otherwise "unclean".

They took the insult graciously, and with the "respect" always bestowed on religious prejudice (but no other kind of prejudice). The spokesman then, when asked what harm cloning might do, answered that atomic bombs were harmful. No disagreement there, but the discussion was in fact supposed to be about cloning. Since it was his choice to shift the discussion to atomic bombs, perhaps he knew more



Religious lobbies have an inside track to influence and power. But, as their contribution to the debate on animal cloning shows, their views are a waste of time

about physics than about biology? But, no, having delivered himself of the daring falsehood that Einstein split the atom, he switched with confidence to geological history. He made the telling point that, since God laboured six days and then rested on the seventh, scientists, too, ought to know when to call a halt.

Now, either he really believed that the world was made in six days, in which case his ignorance alone disqualifies him from being taken seriously. Or, as the presenter charitably suggested, he intended the point purely as an allegory - in which case it was a lousy allegory.

Sometimes in life it is a

good idea to stop: sometimes it is a good idea to go on. The trick is to decide when to stop. The allegory of God resting on the seventh day cannot, in itself, tell us whether we have reached the right point to stop in some particular case. As allegory, the six-day-creation story is empty. As history, it is false. So why bring it up?

The representative of a rival religion on the same panel was frankly confused. He feared that a human clone would lack individuality. It would not be a whole, separate human being but a mere soulless automaton.

When one of the scientists mildly suggested that he might be hurting the feelings of identical twins, he said that identical

twins were a quite different case. Why? Because they occur naturally, rather than under artificial conditions. Once again, no disagreement about that. But weren't we talking about "individuality", and whether clones are "whole human beings" or soulless automata?

This religious spokesman seemed simply unable to grasp that there were two separate arguments going on: first, whether clones are autonomous individuals (in which case the analogy with identical twins is inescapable and his fear groundless); and second, whether there is something objectionable about artificial interference in the natural

processes of reproduction (in which case other arguments should be deployed - but weren't I, I don't want to sound uncharitable, but I respectfully submit to the producers who put together these panels that merely being a spokesman for a particular "tradition" or "community" may not be enough. Isn't a certain minimal qualification in the IQ department desirable, too?)

On a different panel, this time on radio, yet another religious leader was similarly perplexed by identical twins. He too had theological grounds for fearing that a clone would not be a separate individual and would therefore lack "dignity".

He was swiftly informed of the undisputed scientific fact that identical twins are clones of each other with the same genes, exactly like Dolly the sheep except that Dolly's clone is older. Did he really mean to say that identical twins (and we all know some) lack the dignity of separate individuality? His reason for denying the relevance of the twin analogy was even odder than the previous one. Indeed it was transparently self-contradictory.

He had great faith, he informed us, in the power of nurture over nature. Nurture is why identical twins are really different individuals. When you get to know a pair of twins, he pointed out triumphantly, they even look a bit different.

Er, quite so. And if a pair of clones were separated by 50 years, wouldn't their respective natures be even more different? Haven't you just shot yourself in your theological foot? He just didn't get it - but, after all, he hadn't been chosen for his ability to follow an argument.

Religious lobbies, spokesmen of "traditions" and "communities", enjoy privileged access not only to the media but to influential committees of the great and the good, to the House of Lords (as I mentioned above), and to boards of school governors.

Their views are regularly sought, and heard with exaggerated "respect", by parliamentary committees. Religious spokesmen and spokeswomen enjoy an inside track to influence and power which others have to earn through their own ability or expertise.

What is the justification for this? Maybe there is a good reason, and I'm ready to be persuaded by it. But, on the face of it, isn't there more justification for choosing expert witnesses for their knowledge and accomplishments as individuals, than because they represent some group or class of person? Come to think of it, in the light of all those worries about lack of individuality among clones, isn't there a touch of irony here? Maybe even a useful allegory? Ah, now, you're talking!

The writer is Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University.

## BAD BACK?

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## Rough guide to Blair's tartan trouble

Labour faces an army of trouble-makers within its own ranks in Scotland. Unusually, it now finds itself less popular there than south of the Tweed. By Douglas Fraser

The "project" was to do for England what Labour had done in Middle Scotland: appeal to the type of voter with two cars and a driveway who lived around John Smith's Edinburgh home. Five years on, the project has been so successful that Labour is facing up to the unusual sensation, at its inquest conference this weekend, of being less popular in Scotland than it is south of the Tweed.

The reason? Apparently simple. Scotland has four-party politics. If you put the Scottish National Party (SNP) into the mix, Labour at the last poll had 46 per cent of intending voters, down six points, with Nationalists at 26, Tories on 16 and rural pockets of Liberal Democrats up to 10 per cent.

Competing against three opponents has created problems for New Labour. Whereas it is designed to appeal to the English centre ground, the SNP poses a serious risk to Tony Blair's troops by attracting those on the left and undermining the heartlands vote.

But perhaps the reason is not as simple as it looks. The ease with which votes switch away from Labour may reflect the fact that it has been the political Establishment in Scotland throughout the Conservative years - powerless in Westminster while dominant in the nation's council chambers. This week saw local authorities setting their budgets in the toughest round of spending cuts yet. Edinburgh is to shed 830 jobs, and on Thursday faced a Union shutdown of many services in protest. In Glasgow, teachers were on strike for the first time in a decade. The blame is aimed at the Government, but no one is in any doubt that Gordon Brown's budgets - aimed at reassuring Middle England - would do

little to help. Disillusion in Scotland's huge public sector workforce has set in already.

This might be good training for Labour in power, but has created fissures within the party. Talk of New Labour versus Old is misleading: there is a Home Rule Labour cause as well. Last summer, Labour, along with the Liberal Democrats, trade unions, churches and assorted others, agreed a plan for creating a Scottish Parliament with the power to raise tax 3p above the UK rate, backed by the promise from Tony Blair that it would be legislated for in the first session of a Labour administration. But the Tories were warning of the break-up of Britain, and their Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, was making mischief with claims of a "Larian tax".

Somewhere between the offices of Blair and Shadow Scottish Secretary George Robertson, the policy was changed. Such constitutional reform required a referendum, they announced, asking first if the Scots wanted a parliament and second if they wanted it to have tax powers.

Leadership loyalists suggest this was an overdue dose of reality for a policy which had more to do with Caltonian sentimentality than with getting a bill through Westminster. It is argued the two questions, if approved, would embed constitutional change and blunt the tartan tax attacks. But the manner of the change caused fury in the Scottish party. Tony Blair appeared to be backtracking on a promise. And this seemed precisely the kind of policy aimed at winning Middle England, but losing Scottish support to the Nationalists. Devolution spokesman John McAllion, asso-

ciated with Labour's home rule wing, hadn't even been told, and he resigned.

A threatened rebellion by Labour's Scottish executive was quelled only by a desperate plea for party unity. Facing turmoil, Robertson invited ridicule by hastily shifting ground again to propose two referendums, before and after legislation - though within a week he had U-turned again, increasing the chances that early May will see him return to the relative calm of European affairs at which he excelled.

Although the leadership prevailed, the episode left a trail of ill will, not least with those who had won. A group emerged earlier this year, conspiratorially named The Network, dedicated to ensuring such an embarrassment could never happen again. Though few admit to membership, it was deemed to be behind an attempt to oust the Stoppie Jack tendency from the Scottish executive, the unwieldy focus of activist plotting.

So for all the show of pre-election unity in Inverness, there are two loose groupings ready to emerge more prominently after 1 May. On one side are the loyalist leadership supporters such as George Robertson and Jack McConnell, the party's top official in Scotland. Some see them as continuing a tradition of Labour's old right, where Robertson once belonged though McConnell didn't. Some members are appalled at the tactics of those who opposed the policy change last summer. And finding common cause are those who see the new policy as the best way to limit the extent of Scottish home rule. Tam Dalyell, creator of the fabled West Lothian question, is not alone: there are others, such as Brian Wilson, with an anti-devolution past,

and senior councillors who don't want to lose their powers to an Edinburgh legislature.

Against them are ranged home rulers such as trade unionist Bill Speirs and veteran home rule activist Bob McLean, determined to push the cause if the leadership takes fright again. There is the left - now branded Old Labour - though not necessarily keen on devolution, and also the awkward, oppositionist tendency, given to mistrust of Blair. Count MPs such as George Galloway and Dennis Canavan in all three categories.

New Labour has the momentum and the fire-power until the election. And it is clearly using it in a bid to ensure that a prospective Labour administration in Edinburgh does not go completely native. One of the main threats to the constitutional reform is of antagonism between Edinburgh and London resulting in growing demands for separatism.

Yet the closer a Scottish parliament comes, the more the mechanics of it seem to dampen enthusiasm. Labour activists who identified as primarily Scottish when the English party was doing badly have less reason to do so now that they are close to power on both sides of the Border. And the real test of the commitment to an Edinburgh parliament may come when senior figures have to decide if their future lies there or in Westminster. George Robertson has been forced into saying he would opt to go north. Robin Cook, Gordon Brown, Donald Dewar and Brian Wilson, however, may find the attractions of Whitehall keep them there. After all, Scotland has a long tradition of exporting its best talent to the benefit of the English.

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# business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098  
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

## Littlewoods backs out of Freemans deal

Nigel Cope

Littlewoods yesterday unexpectedly backed out of its £395m deal to buy the Freemans home shopping business from Sears after learning that the Sealfords to British Shoe group had received approaches from other bidders. The leading candidate is N Brown, the Manchester mail order company controlled by Sir David Alliance who has made no secret of his interest in acquiring Freemans. Though other possible buyers could include Pinault Printemps-La Redoute

which owns the Empire stores operation in the UK and Otto Versand, the German group which owns Cretan. N Brown is considered by analysts as being the most serious bidder. Littlewoods withdrew from the fray after it was told that Sears was in active negotiations with other parties. Littlewoods had insisted on exclusive negotiation rights and was thought to be angered by Sears actions. Sears said it had received approaches from "a number of parties". Though N Brown, the frontrunner it is understood that

Lanica Trust, the tiny investment vehicle controlled by 31-year-old Andrew Regan had been interested though it is not clear if he has made a formal approach. There is speculation that any delay in the deal could spell the end for Sears' chief executive, Liam Strong, who has been under pressure from institutions frustrated at the group's lacklustre performance. He has been keen to sell Freemans quickly in order to fulfil his promise of returning £410m to shareholders. The Littlewoods deal hit a snag when it

was unexpectedly referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission last month. Mr Strong emphasised the need for speed yesterday: "It remains the board's intention to achieve the price expected for Freemans and to return the cash to ordinary shareholders. We are committed to achieving this in the shortest possible timeframe." Though Sears shares fell 0.5p to 81.5p on the news, analysts said the development should be viewed positively. "Initially it seems to suggest that Sears

can't close deals. But really it is that Sears has committed itself to returning £410m to shareholders and is looking at the best way to achieve that." Littlewoods said it was disappointed with the outcome but said it was still interested in buying Freemans if Sears' other options collapsed. "We still want to do this deal with them but felt that if they did not want to negotiate with us exclusively then there was no reason to pursue it." Littlewoods has informed the MMC that its discussions with Sears have been terminated.

However, it is still possible that the MMC will continue its investigation. It can ask the DTT to lay aside a merger inquiry if it is satisfied that the merger has been terminated. With no formal confirmation yet received from Littlewoods, the MMC said that "at the moment we still have an on-going inquiry". Littlewoods said the collapse of its deal had no implications for the proposed sale it announced earlier this week of its high street stores which it is hoping will fetch up to £600m. However, analysts said the

position was now "more interesting" and questioned whether Littlewoods would be able to find a buyer for the whole chain at the price it is seeking. The capture of Freemans would mark a coup for N Brown which occupies a small niche in direct mail order catalogues aimed principally at older customers. But, though it is relatively small, it is regarded as one of the most efficient mail order groups in the country with state-of-the-art database management skills and distribution systems. The company mounted a

£1bn-plus bid for the Littlewoods empire in 1995 in conjunction with Iceland. Though rejected by the group's family shareholders, that deal would have seen N Brown take the home shopping division, with Iceland retaining the high street stores while the Littlewoods pools business would have been sold. N Brown has a market share of slightly more than 4 per cent, and it is unlikely that its purchase of Freemans, which has 8 per cent, would attract the attention of the competition authorities.

## Cable firms steal a march on Murdoch

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

The cable industry took a huge step towards consolidation yesterday when the three largest operators announced a supplier of set-top boxes for planned digital television services, leapfrogging a similar decision widely expected by satellite rival BSkyB. The move brings together Telewest Communications, the largest cable company, with Bell Cablemedia and Nynex CableComms in a broad collaboration which will involve combined purchasing and greater co-operation over marketing strategies. The three partners have chosen General Instrument Corporation, a large US electronics company, to supply the set-top boxes, which enable customers

to decode digital TV signals. Telewest said General Instrument planned to supply hundreds of thousands of boxes by the end of 1998. Further suppliers may be asked to sub-contract manufacturing later, though the announcement is a setback for Pace Micro Technology, the small UK company which had hoped to sell its digital decoder to the cable companies and BSkyB. Significantly, the three cable operators also pledged to continue the partnership after Bell and Nynex merge with Cable & Wireless's telephone subsidiary Mercury later this year to form a £5bn cable giant, C&W Communications. Other cable companies are also likely to join the alliance over the next few months, including Comcast and

General Cable, offering a single digital alternative to BSkyB. A spokesman for Telewest said: "We are working very closely with the new executive team at C&W Communications. We are now working together on other services, including a joint electronic programme guide which steers customers through the new services on offer." Telewest said one big advantage of its service was that customers would not have to buy the boxes, instead paying the cost of the equipment as part of a monthly subscription. BSkyB intends to ask customers to pay about £200 for their boxes, a price subsidised to encourage a strong take-up of the service. When the service begins in October or November, cable customers will be offered many more television channels than the average of 50 on analogue cable TV, along with internet access and video-on-demand. Telewest said it was talking to banks, supermarkets and other retailers about further interactive services to come in 1998.

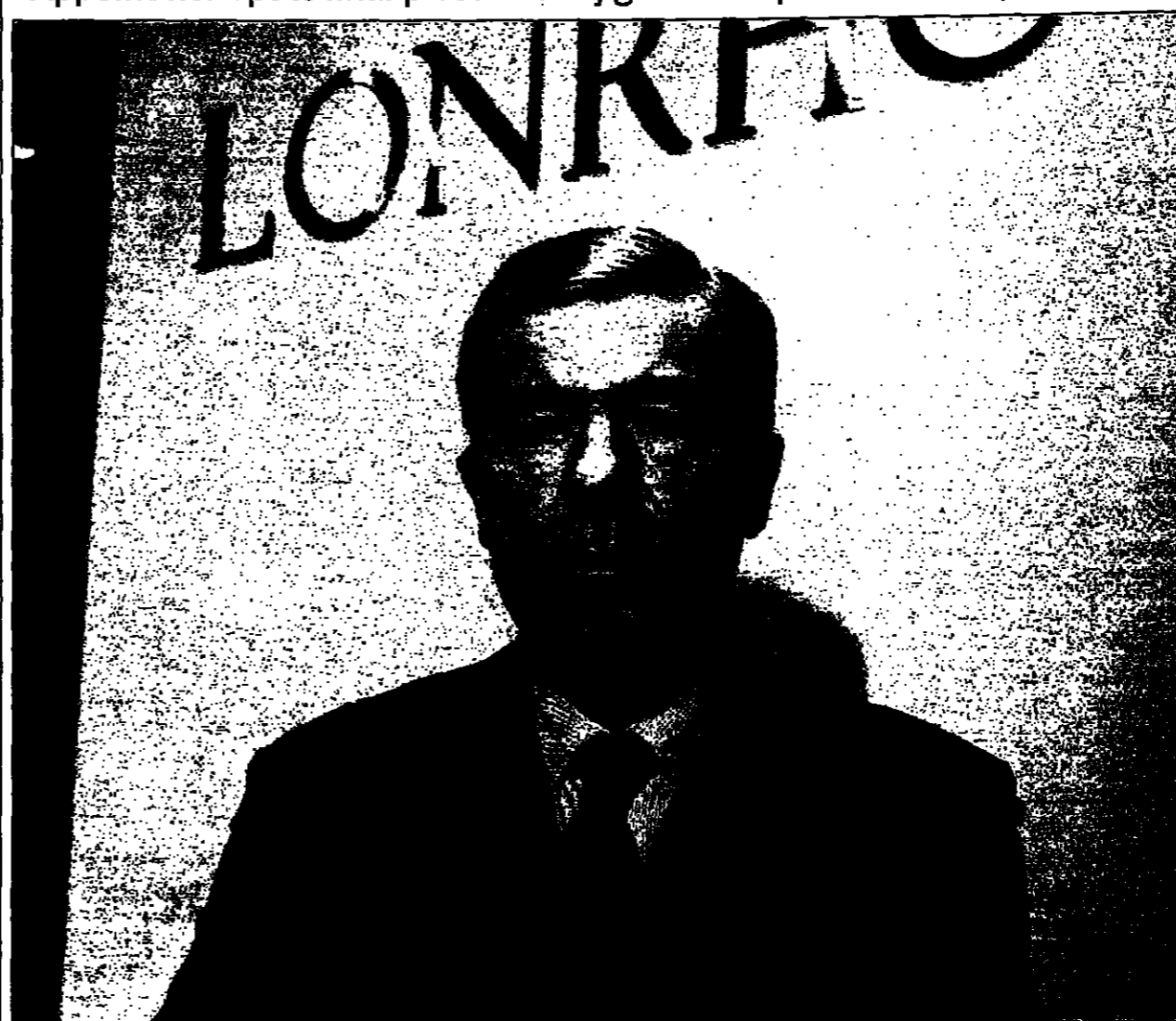
## Second setback for Sky's German hopes

BSkyB is pulling out of a planned digital pay-TV venture with Germany's Kirch Group. Analysts said this was a further setback to BSkyB's hopes of dominating the European digital pay-TV market, writes John Willcock. The breakdown of the joint venture is BSkyB's second failed attempt to enter Germany, Europe's biggest media market. Separately, BSkyB has not explained why it has delayed awarding contracts for the supply of digital TV decoders for its UK digital pay-TV service, planned to begin by the end of the year. BSkyB's shares fell as much as 4.2 per cent in early trading before recovering to close at 616.5p, down 7p. The company, which is 40 per cent owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, said the companies ended talks by mutual agreement "because of a failure to agree on a number of

fundamental issues." It did not disclose further details. The aborted venture with Kirch casts a shadow over BSkyB's attempts to move into digital satellite TV in Europe after it failed earlier to agree terms with Kirch's rival Bertelsmann. There has been a year-long scramble among TV broadcasters in Europe to seize control of a market made possible by digital TV technology that promises many more channels and bigger revenues. BSkyB wanted access to the 1.5 million subscribers to Premiere, a German pay-TV movie channel owned by Bertelsmann, Kirch and Canal Plus of France. It planned to buy shares from Bertelsmann and Canal Plus, which each own 37.5 per cent. In return, Kirch said it would provide the network for Bertelsmann's Club RTL, a package of digital TV programming to begin in the autumn.

News of the supply deal came as a surprise to industry experts, who had thought BSkyB would be the first group to announce a firm agreement to supply set-top boxes for its digital satellite service, planned to start towards the end of this year. Rupert Murdoch, head of News Corporation, BSkyB's largest shareholder, is thought to have chaired a board meeting at the group in London last Tuesday to finalise a deal. Analysts played down the rivalry with BSkyB, arguing that the new digital cable service will follow existing cable policy in offering Sky programming alongside other channels. Mathew Horsman, media analyst with stockbrokers Henderson Crosthwaite, said: "This is consistent with Sky's view that the company will be the platform for all kinds of delivery systems, including satellite and cable. But this is a great deal for the cable industry and a sign that operators are getting their act together and consolidating."

Appointment puts final piece of the jigsaw into place at reshaped group



Top tier: Sir John Craven says there is no conflict of interest in his new position

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

## Sir John Craven chairs Lonrho

Lonrho, the mining, hotels and trading group, yesterday completed the overhaul of its board following the departure of the German financier Dieter Bock by appointing a senior banker. Sir John Craven, as non-executive chairman, writes Michael Harrison. Sir John, 56, former chief executive of the investment bank Morgan Grenfell, will take over the £120,000 a year post from the current Lonrho chairman, Sir John Leahy, after the company's annual meeting on 26 March. Morgan Grenfell, now owned by Deutsche Bank, is Lonrho's financial adviser and Sir John remains chairman of Deutsche

Bank's investment banking division. However, Sir John said there was no conflict of interest since his sole role at the bank now was to bring in new business. "My position at Lonrho is an entirely personal one," said Sir John. "It has nothing to do with Deutsche Morgan Grenfell. They are Lonrho's financial advisers and I would hope and

anticipate that will continue to be the case." Sir John, who has several other directorships, said he would not be devoting a fixed proportion of his time to Lonrho but would be available to its chief executive Nick Morrell whenever necessary. His role will be to help in strategic development. Mr Morrell is expected to outline his plans for the group in May or June after the European Com-

mission has ruled on whether the South African mining group Anglo American can keep its 28 per cent stake in Lonrho. Mr Bock agreed to sell his 18.8 per cent stake in Lonrho to Anglo for £257m last October and step down as chief executive. Earlier this week Mr Bock severed all links with Lonrho by resigning as non-executive deputy chairman. With the Metropole hotel chain sold to Stakis and the Princess hotel business up for auction, the plan is to demerge Lonrho's African trading businesses and other non-mining interests this summer. But these plans depend on whether Brussels blocks Anglo's investment.

## Lloyd's agent is fined £60,000

Jim Treanor  
Banking Correspondent

Sedgwick Oakwood Lloyd's Underwriting Agents has been fined £60,000 by the regulatory division at Lloyd's of London. This is the largest fine that the insurance market has levied against a firm.

The penalty was one of six issued against Lloyd's agents or brokers in the last three months, according to statistics published for the first time by the insurance market yesterday.

During the period, one underwriting agent and one broking firm were de-registered, Lloyd's said.

A spokesman for the insurance market said the figures gave the first indication of the activities of the new regulatory regime introduced in the summer under David Gittings, who was hired from the Securities and Futures Authority, the City regulator.

Last August Lloyd's speeded up and revised its regulatory procedures and introduced new fixed penalties.

Lloyd's said yesterday that during 1996 some 55 formal warnings were issued while so far this year 20 warnings have been issued for compliance breaches.

Last year Lloyd's also introduced an individual registration process which has so far resulted in 32 applications being withdrawn or refused and 38 restricted by the imposition of conditions.

Lloyd's said Sedgwick Oakwood, formerly known as Sedgwick Lloyd's Underwriting Agents (SLUA), had admitted two charges of misconduct for which it had received two separate fines of £35,000 and £25,000. In assessing the penalty, Lloyd's took into account the fact that SLUA initially put up the sum of £637,000 as security for the underwriting activities of the seven South African names to which the problem related.

## European inflation in January

Harmonised National Inflation Measure	EU %	Do they meet the Maastricht criteria?
Belgium	2.2	✓
Denmark	2.6	✓
Germany	1.7	✓
Greece	8.6	✗
Spain (p)	2.8	✓
France	1.8	✓
Ireland (p)	1.9	✓
Italy	2.6	✓
Luxembourg	1.3	✓
Netherlands	1.8	✓
Austria (p)	1.6	✓
Portugal	2.8	✓
Finland	0.9	✓
Sweden	1.3	✓
UK	2.1	✓
EU	2.2	(p) provisional Source: Eurostat

## Italy and Spain fail EMU inflation test

Yvette Cooper

Four European member states, including Italy and Spain, would fail to qualify for economic and monetary union on the basis of their current inflation records, according to new figures released yesterday from Brussels. The data casts fresh doubt on whether the Italian economy in particular will be in strong enough shape for the lira to take part in a single currency from 1999. The critical question for Italy, Spain and Portugal will be whether they can get their inflation performance to converge towards their European partners during the next twelve months. EU leaders are expected to meet in April, 1998, to decide which nations will be in the first group to adopt the euro.

According to the Maastricht Treaty, member states joining EMU must have an average rate of inflation that does not exceed the inflation performance of the three best performing countries by more than 1.5 percentage points. Eleven out of the 15 member states currently meet this criteria, according to figures issued by the European Commission. However, Spain, Portugal and Greece fail the EMU inflation test, on the basis of new harmonised measures of inflation. Italy meets the Maastricht criteria if only one month's figures are taken into account. But

on the European Commission's preferred method of defining the Maastricht criteria to consider twelve months of data, then Italy still fails the inflation test, too. The new EU inflation measure, the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices, calculates inflation on a comparable basis, by measuring the price changes of the same goods in each country. At the moment national indices are based on very different baskets of goods, and on different statistical methods to calculate averages. The discrepancies between national measures and the new EU index are widest for Sweden and the UK. The HICP measures UK inflation at 2.1 per cent in January, whilst the most com-

monly used UK measure, RPIX was 3.1 per cent. The new HICP for Germany shows inflation at 1.7 per cent, compared to the German consumer price index which stands at 1.8 per cent. For France, the national and EU measures of inflation co-incide at 1.8 per cent. The three lowest inflation countries in January were Sweden, Finland and Luxembourg. An unweighted average of their inflation performance is 1.2 per cent, putting the Maastricht ceiling 1.5 percentage points higher at 2.7 per cent. However, the Commission's preferred way to calculate the inflation criteria is to examine inflation performance over a twelve month period. The Commission released additional fig-

ures to show the average inflation performance of member states over the last year, on the harmonised index. By this measure, the three best performing countries were Germany, Finland and Sweden, with an average inflation rate over the twelve month period of 1.1 per cent, producing a Maastricht ceiling of 2.6 per cent. Italian inflation averaged over the last twelve months is 3.7 per cent, well above the criteria if measured in this way. A spokesman for economics and monetary affairs commissioner Yves-Thibault de Silguy said: "Using the harmonised index you get all the countries except Portugal, Italy, Spain and Greece qualifying."

## Gas suppliers split on date for Scotland

Chris Godsmark

Independent gas suppliers competing for a slice of British Gas's business are split over whether to bring forward the next phase of domestic competition to a new start date in October, it emerged yesterday. The Gas Forum, which represents most independent suppliers in the residential and commercial markets, has written to Lord Fraser, Energy Minister, urging the Government to offer competition to a further 2.5 million homes later this year.

The idea is that we would kick off with another phase comprising Scotland and some of Northern England, though the centre of gravity of the process would still be April 1998. However, a postscript to the letter said it did not represent the views of three large suppliers: Quadrant, run by Esso and Shell, Mobil and Calor, a joint venture between Calor and Texaco. Calor, which claims to have grabbed the most customers in trials so far, described the letter as "irresponsible".

Neil Lambert, Calor's joint general manager, said he was "frankly very annoyed" by the letter. "We think the next trial should take place as early as possible once the systems run by TransCo are able to handle it. This letter is saying we should go whether the systems are in place or not." Mr Lambert said he saw no reason to disbelieve claims by TransCo that it needed a crucial few months breathing space to complete new computer systems which would support customer databases to track households as they switched supplier. Yesterday competition was extended to a further 900,000 homes in Kent and Sussex, on top of the 1.1 million in trials in the South-west of England.

### STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	4399.30	+39.20	+0.9	4399.30	3632.30	3.65
FTSE 250	4707.50	+28.90	+0.6	4707.50	4015.30	3.34
FTSE 350	2174.60	+18.10	+0.8	2174.60	1816.60	3.58
FTSE Small Cap	3360.06	+5.94	+0.3	3360.06	1854.06	2.89
FTSE All Share	2145.25	+16.93	+0.8	2145.25	1791.95	3.33
New York	6963.17	+17.32	+0.2	7067.45	5032.94	1.96
Tokyo	19041.33	-232.18	-1.3	22666.80	17303.65	0.891
Hong Kong	13416.36	+5.60	+0.0	13888.24	10204.87	3.157
Frankfurt	3417.60	+52.61	+1.6	3417.60	2253.36	1.461

Statistics as of 7 March

### INTEREST RATES

Short sterling*	UK medium gilt	US long bond
6-Mth	7.5	7.1
3-Mth	7.5	7.1
1-Mth	7.5	7.1

### Money Market Rates

Index	1 Month	1 Year	3 Month	6 Month
UK	6.00	6.68	7.29	7.39
US	5.38	6.00	6.59	6.85
Japan	0.41	0.50	2.36	3.19
Germany	3.15	3.12	3.67	6.30

### Bond Yields\*

Index	1 Month	1 Year	3 Month	6 Month
UK	6.00	6.68	7.29	7.39
US	5.38	6.00	6.59	6.85
Japan	0.41	0.50	2.36	3.19
Germany	3.15	3.12	3.67	6.30

### MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Index	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change (%)
Alfa Romeo	185.5	15.5	9.1
Hardy Oil & Gas	285	19	7.1
Rolls-Royce	255	16	6.7

### CURRENCIES

Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£/\$	1.6121	+0.23c	1.5284
£/DM	1.6135	+0.25c	1.5284
DM/£	2.7704	+1.56p	2.5884
¥/£	186.001	+0.603	181.002
¥/DM	121.585	+0.205	105.275
£/Index	98.4	+0.3	83.6

### OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago
Oil Brent	19.55	+0.03	18.38
Gold	352.00	-0.30	393.75
Gold £	218.35	-0.49	257.45
Base Rates	-	-	6.00pc



JEREMY WARNER

The criticism I would make of Mr Lilley is that he hasn't gone far enough, though to be fair, he's probably gone about as far as any politician would dare just ahead of a general election.

## We have further to go on pension reform

Last December the International Monetary Fund published a paper called "Aging Populations and Public Pensions Policy". This might not seem like a title to set the pulse racing but it should nevertheless be essential reading for anyone interested in the background to the Government's announcement this week of plans to privatise the basic state pension, changing it, in the process, from a tax-funded pay as you go scheme to a funded investment approach.

The study finds that existing public pension arrangements are beginning to contribute to serious fiscal stresses in most industrial countries, and that these can only get much worse over the next few decades in the absence of appropriate reform. The countries most at risk are those that rely heavily on pay as you go schemes, where pension liabilities are funded out of current Government revenue. Among the developed countries, these are Germany, France, Italy and the UK.

The paper then goes on to examine the various options for reform, including - surprise, surprise - the exact same one as that proposed by Peter Lilley and the Government. It just goes to show that there's no such thing as a new idea in politics. Actually, the trail proposed by the Government has already been blazed by Chile and a number of other Latin American countries, inviting some uncharitable comparisons with the economics of the banana republic. None of this should detract

from the underlying merits of what Mr Lilley is trying to do here. Indeed the criticism I would make of Mr Lilley is that he hasn't gone far enough, though, to be fair, he's probably gone about as far as any politician would dare just ahead of a general election.

Britain approaches the problem of state pension liabilities from a very different perspective to that of other European countries. In Britain the problem is not so much the growing cost of our pay as you go arrangements as their inability to deliver a decent level of benefit. The flat rate state pension is set at a living wage and the benefit offered by Serps (the state earnings related scheme) is also inadequate for most people.

This is the very reverse of the position in Germany, France and Italy, where the promised benefits are very generous but the tax raised to pay for them increasingly inadequate. The challenge for Britain is to find ways of forcing up the level of benefit without significantly adding to the burden of taxation; the challenge on the Continent is the arguably even more difficult one of cutting benefit to a level that the Government can afford.

The differing nature of the problem requires correspondingly differing approaches to reform. On the Continent the emphasis has to be on adjusting both contributions and benefit structures, so as to bring them more into line. In Britain, raising the level of benefit

requires people to recognise that they need to save more during their working lives or work longer.

Long term demographic trends towards a more aged population are greatly enhancing the nature of the problem. People are living longer, and they have fewer children with the result that fewer and fewer workers are paying for the retirement of more and more pensioners. According to the IMF, there are approximately four people of working age in Britain at the moment for every one person of pensionable age.

This ratio falls to a level of a bit more than two to one by the middle of the next century. If you think this a sorry state of affairs, the outlook in Germany and Italy is much, much worse. In Germany last year, the ratio was a little bit better than Britain. But by the middle of the next century there will be fewer than 1.5 workers for every pensioner. The progress for Italy is worse still. Factor children into this calculation and you are left with the bizarre spectacle of less than one worker for each dependent (defined as those below the age of 15 or above the age of 65). Japan faces an equally daunting future. Official policies to restrict child birth will make China the most aged population of the lot.

So in some respects, Britain is sitting pretty. Its aging problem is not as severe as that of many other countries and its pay as you go arrangements are mean enough to be

affordable. According to John Hills of the London School of Economics, National Insurance contributions as they stand are easily sufficient to fund present arrangements into the indefinite future. Indeed there may be scope to cut them.

So why doesn't the Government just leave well alone? Even the IMF concedes that the fiscal cost of introducing a fully funded scheme in place of a defined benefit pay as you go system may be very high. "Meeting these costs may require, in many cases, an amount of fiscal adjustment that is substantially higher than what would be needed to fix the pay as you go system", the IMF paper says.

As it is the extra fiscal cost for Britain is relatively small, if only because present arrangements pay out so little in benefit. This makes the transition to a fully funded system just about feasible where others would find it next to impossible. Indeed the Government claims that by changing the tax treatment of private occupational and personal pension schemes, it can actually make the whole thing pretty much fiscally neutral. We will see.

The upshot, in any case, is that at some stage in the dim and distant future, the Government will be shot of the £40bn a year cost of providing state pensions altogether and the fully funded scheme will be yielding a flat rate pension for all at least three times higher than the present state pension. If that sounds like

magic, it's actually just slight of hand. The extra benefit is derived from the effect over many years of an accumulated investment return. As for getting shot of the liability, that comes at a heavy cost to the present generation of tax payers who must continue to fund the costs of pensions during the transitional period while progressively being deprived of the National Insurance contribution of those joining the workforce.

In other words, it is us, the present generation, who pay for the lower taxes and higher public pensions of the next generation. All very noble, I'm sure, but would anyone actually want to vote for it? Even John Major concedes that of itself, this is not a great vote winner. Labour believes it to be a positive vote loser.

Whatever. The truth of the matter is that whoever wins the next election is going to have to do something about long term pension benefits. Even Mr Lilley's funded public pension delivers a level of benefit too low to live on. The solution is to go further - to persuade or compel people to save a much larger proportion of their earnings than the piddling little amounts envisaged in this proposal. The justification for compulsion in this case is an obvious one. Forcing people to save for their old age is in essence just a privatised form of taxation, only at least everyone knows what the money is eventually going to be spent on. It's the way to go.

## Finance minister warns Nomura of 'severe measures'

Richard Lloyd Parry  
Tokyo

Nomura, the world's largest stockbroking house, was yesterday warned by Hiroshi Mitsuoka, Japan's finance minister, that he would "take severe measures" against the company if investigations into suspected unauthorised trading were confirmed.

The warning came a day after Nomura said it suspected that two of its directors in Japan had paid millions of yen of illegal trading profits to a gangster, and amid strong rumours that Hideo Sakamaki, president of Nomura, would resign soon over the affair.

"In order to prevent a similar case, we must take strict measures," said Mr Mitsuoka. The company could have its operations suspended for up to six months, according to an official at the finance ministry's securities bureau. He added that Nomura could also be fined if the trades breached criminal codes. Nomura was punished by the Finance Ministry back in 1991

after it discovered that the company had compensated large clients for losses on investments to the tune of ¥128bn (\$623m) at the expense of foreign clients. The company was forced to suspend stock trading at 87 branches for four weeks.

News of the latest scandal led Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, who is pushing through plans to deregulate Japan's financial markets, to ask yesterday: "Why do these things keep happening?" However, he failed to mention that he resigned as Finance Minister in 1991 after the ministry had consistently failed to prevent financial scandals.

Speculation was rife in Tokyo yesterday. Mr Sakamaki will step down to take responsibility for the scandal. He would be the second Nomura president to quit in the space of seven years: his predecessor resigned after a similar incident in 1990.

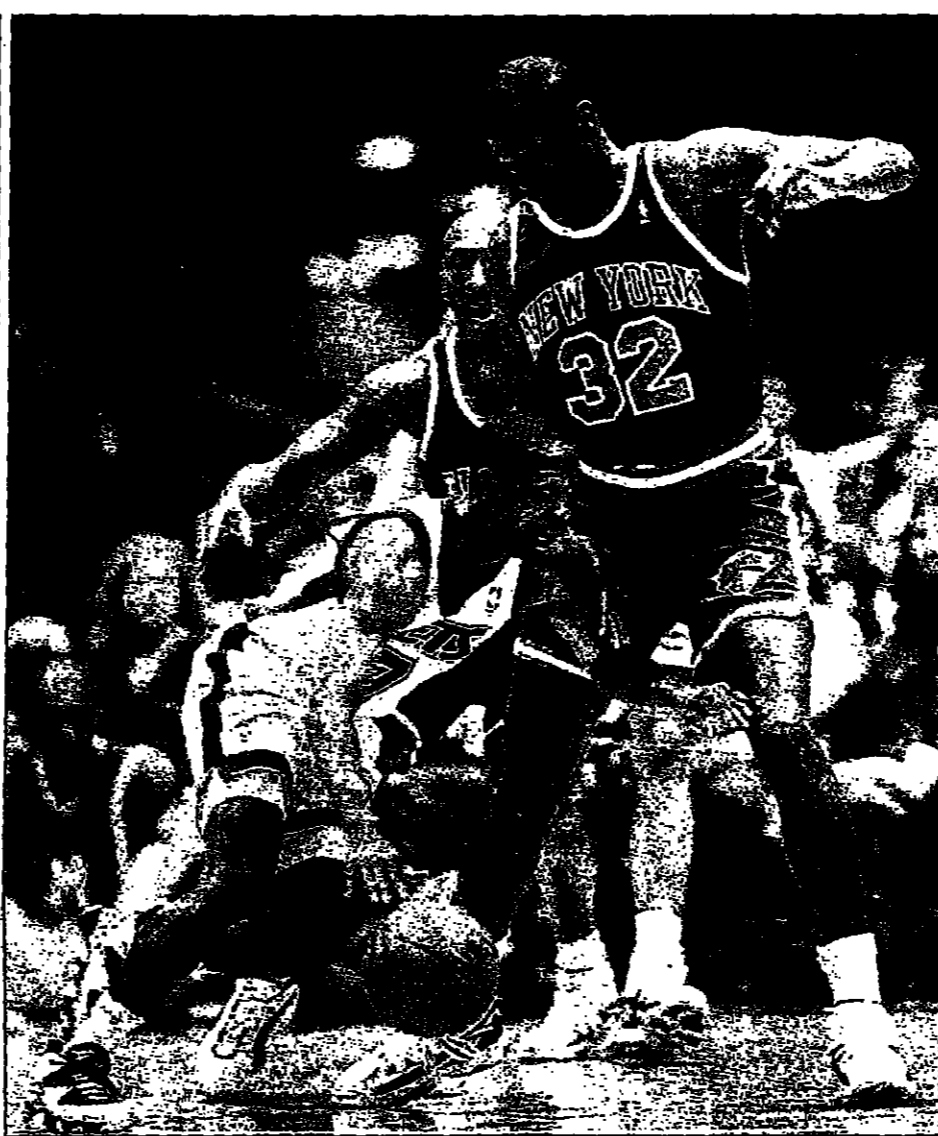
A spokesman for Nomura said yesterday that he "knew nothing about Mr Sakamaki's intentions, and said he could not make any further comment

about the president's position or about the exact amount of money that is alleged to have been siphoned out of Nomura by the two directors.

Fallout from the scandal continued to undermine Nomura's share price on an otherwise generally good day of trading on Japan's stock market. Nomura's shares fell 3 per cent to ¥1,530 in Tokyo, in contrast to the overall gains of almost 1 per cent registered by the Nikkei 225 index.

According to press reports in Japan, the two directors at Nomura allegedly dealt stocks from the company's own account and transferred the profits to a property company. The unnamed company had close family links with a *sokaya* - a racketeer who extracts money from companies.

"We are profoundly sorry for engaging in transactions which should not have taken place," said Atsushi Saito, a vice president of Nomura. According to one report, the illegal "discretionary trades" were carried out by the two directors since 1993.



Sporting assets: The New York Knicks playing basketball at Madison Square Garden

## ITT sells sports teams to fend off Hilton bid

John Willcock

ITT has agreed to sell the New York Knicks basketball team, the New York Rangers hockey team, the MSG Cablevision network, and half of Madison Square Garden in New York, in an attempt to fend off a hostile bid from Hilton Hotels Corporation.

New York-based ITT is selling the lot to its business partner Cablevision Systems for \$650m (£405m) in cash and options and \$115m in debt.

In January Hilton Hotels Corporation, based in Beverly Hills, California, launched a \$10.5bn hostile takeover offer for ITT. The company rejected the bid as too low and said it would fight hard to remain independent.

By selling assets such as its interest in Madison Square Garden, where the Knicks and the Rangers play, ITT intends to reinvest the proceeds in its faster-growing casino and hotel businesses.

"\$650m is a very good price," said Dennis Foran, an analyst at McDonald & Co in New York yesterday. An ITT spokesman said

more asset sales were planned. "We've brought in close to a billion dollars in the last 30 days, and there's still more to come," said Jim Gallagher, the company's spokesman, yesterday.

Cablevision Systems will increase its 50 per cent stake in Madison Square Garden to 88.5 per cent via the sale, and ITT has the right to sell Cablevision the rest for another \$150m during the next two years.

Cablevision and ITT completed their joint acquisition of Madison Square Garden from Viacom, the media giant, for \$1bn in March 1995. If it exercises its option to sell its entire stake, ITT, which has been criticised for over-paying for assets, would reap about \$150m more than it paid.

ITT had planned to tie Madison Square Garden into its hotel and casino business. But this never materialised.

Analysts and investors have said Madison Square Garden was too regional in scope to provide any benefit to ITT's Casuar World casinos and Sheraton hotel chain, which are national or international brands.

### IN BRIEF

#### Aerospatiale expects doubled profits

Aerospatiale, the French aerospace and defence group, forecast that net profits would more than double this year to Fr1.6bn (£171m) thanks to rising civil aircraft deliveries, cost-saving measures and the strength of the dollar. The company expects sales to reach Fr60bn this year and Airbus, in which it has a 37.9 per cent stake, to deliver 190 aircraft compared with 126 in 1996.

Last year Aerospatiale swung back into the black with net income of Fr812m on sales of Fr5.1bn compared with a net loss of Fr981m in 1995. Airbus contributed Fr1.75bn in operating income in 1996 but overall profits were held back by losses of Fr224m in the helicopter division.

#### SFA acts over Robson Cotterell

The Securities and Futures Authority has reprimanded and suspended David Porter from the register of representatives for a year from 2 December 1996, fined him £10,000 and ordered him to pay costs of £10,360. The SFA said it also reprimanded Mr Porter's former employer, Robson Cotterell, fined it £20,000 and ordered it to pay £10,000 costs for failing to adequately monitor and supervise his activities and for failing to ensure that his trading complied with SFA rules.

Mr Porter's suspension relates to his allegedly churning the portfolios of two clients, the SFA said. "Between January and November 1994, Mr Porter undertook 188 and 189 trades respectively on the accounts of two clients. Stocks were repeatedly traded rather than held and a number of stocks were traded on four or more occasions during the period," the SFA said. It added that Robson Cotterell is required to refund a proportion of commission and other charges paid by the two clients.

#### Cater Allen to buy Aitken Campbell

Cater Allen has reached an outline agreement to acquire Union's market-making subsidiary, Aitken Campbell. Union announced last week that, as part of its reorganisation, it would pull out of proprietary trading businesses, adding that negotiations to dispose of Aitken Campbell were at an advanced stage. Union also advised the Bank of England that it wished to terminate a money market counterparty relationship with the bank, adding that it will run out outstanding positions in the next few weeks.

#### Rights to fund Saville Gordon deal

J Saville Gordon Group is buying Rutland Industrial Estates and making a five-for-six, £43.1m rights issue at 55p a share. The company said that Rutland had conditionally agreed to acquire two industrial property portfolios for £46.34m with annual net rental income of £5.44m. The £605,000 consideration for Rutland will be satisfied through an issue of 530,000 new shares and £75,000 cash. Additionally, Roger Carey, formerly a group managing director of Slough Estates, has been appointed chief executive of J Saville Gordon.

#### Greggs boosts profits by 20%

Greggs, the rapidly expanding bakery chain, reported a rise of almost 20 per cent in pre-tax profits to £15.6m for 1996, and lifted the dividend total from 26p to 32p. Mike Durrington, managing director, said profits in the first nine weeks of this year were in line with budget and were ahead of the same period last year. "We look forward to reporting satisfactory progress over the year as a whole," he said.

## US judgment almost wipes out GKN profits

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Profits at GKN, one of the UK's largest engineering groups, were yesterday almost wiped out after a US court judge ordered the company to pay \$591m (£370m) in damages over a dispute involving its American car exhaust business. The timing of the final judgment was a complete surprise

to GKN executives, coming just hours after the company had reported record pre-tax profits for 1996 of £363m. The group said it would now be making a provision of £270m off the headline profit figures, reducing the figure for last year to £92.8m.

However GKN said it was unlikely it would have to pay the cash to the court in Charlotte, North Carolina, until the out-

come of an appeal before a panel of judges, which could take more than 18 months. The company also said the damages would be reduced by a third because some of the 1,000 US franchisees bringing the case had dropped out of the claim. The jury's previous recommendation had been for damages of up to \$554m.

The news sent GKN shares surging ahead in late stock

market, reflecting investors' relief that the scale of the problem had effectively been capped and that previous estimates of damages of \$740m had proved too pessimistic. The shares closed 46p higher at £10.20p.

A GKN spokesman said: "We're now on more certain ground and we can get the case out of the mainstream running of the company. But we still

have to go through the agonising stage-by-stage appeals process."

The long-running case was brought by garage owners across the US who operated franchise outlets for GKN's American car exhaust fitting service, called Mienke Discount Muffler Shops. They had claimed GKN had defrauded them by allegedly concealing commission payments made

by the garages to the group's in-house US advertising agency. However the early indication was that the claim would not exceed \$31m including interest.

Analysis pointed out that GKN was building up its cash reserves at the rate of £100m every year, so if the appeal took two years to come to court the company could have amassed almost enough funds to cover the damages.

## US job figures boost markets on both sides of the Atlantic

John Willcock

A favourable mix of US employment and earnings figures boosted stock and bond markets on both sides of the Atlantic yesterday, as investors concluded that the Federal Reserve would not have to raise interest rates soon.

The February non-farm payroll numbers from the US were ahead of analysts' expectations but were offset by weaker-than-expected average hourly earnings.

The FTSE-100 index closed 20.9 points higher at a record 4421.2, while the Dow Jones industrial index in New York rallied more than 50 points in late morning trading yesterday and triggered the exchange's automatic curbs on index-arbitrage trades.

The US Labor Department said average hourly earnings in February rose by 3 cents, or 0.2 per cent, a smaller rise than analysts expected. At the same time, 339,000 jobs were created last month, the most since May and more than the 231,000 jobs forecast. The US jobs rate fell to 5.3 per cent from 5.4 per cent in January.

The report offered relief to some investors, who said the Fed's chairman, Alan Greenspan, would not now have to act im-

## Property recovery gives boost to builders

Clifford German

The recovery in property prices has started to feed through to housebuilding activity, according to new figures from the Department of the Environment.

The upturn in housebuilding ensured that the fourth quarter of 1996 was the busiest period for the construction industry since 1991, allowing for price increases and seasonal factors.

However, the pace of the upturn in construction is slow. The total volume of output rose by 1 per cent between the third and fourth quarters, and the final period in 1996 was only 1 per cent above the same three months in 1995.

The volume of repair and maintenance work was unchanged on the third quarter and on the same period in the previous year. The volume of

new construction work, though, was up 3 per cent in the fourth quarter. A strong increase in private sector work was offset by a decline in the public sector.

New private housing projects led the way with an increase of 10 per cent over the third quarter and 23 per cent above the fourth quarter of 1995.

New infrastructure work, taking in roads, power stations and bridges, was 5 per cent up in the

fourth quarter. 2 per cent year-on-year. New construction work in the private commercial sector was up 2 per cent and 9 per cent respectively but new work in the industrial sector fell 3 per cent on the quarter and was unchanged on the year.

In January this year the building of 17,000 houses was started in the UK, compared with 12,700 in the same month in 1996.

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Legal & General  
Investment  
Management

## market report / shares

## Data Bank

FTSE 100  
4420.3 +21.0

FTSE 250  
4713.9 +6.3

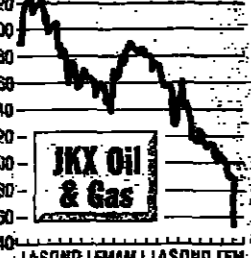
FTSE 350  
2183.4 +8.8

SEAQ VOLUME  
924.2m shares,  
54,248 bargains

Gifts Index  
95.70 +0.15

## Share spotlight

share price, pence



## Footsie takes cue from Wall Street and breaks 4,400

## MARKET REPORT

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Shares broke decisively through the 4,400 barrier on the FTSE 100 index yesterday, ending 21 points ahead at a new closing high of 4,420.3. The stock market took its cue from Wall Street, where the Dow Jones index had powered up over 50 points to hit the magic 7,000 level by late afternoon trading in London.

The storming end to the day came after dealers sat on their hands for most of the morning, waiting for the release of key US unemployment figures relating to non-farm payrolls.

These are being seen as giving a crucial pointer to which way Alan Greenspan, Federal Reserve chairman, will move on interest rates at the Fed's meeting later this month.

In the event, when the statistics came through at lunchtime they gave mixed signals, with the February payroll figures coming in ahead of expectations, while hourly

earnings figures were weaker. After some hesitation, the market decided the figures lessened the likelihood of a rate rise, with both gilts and shares joining in the surge.

But analysts urged caution. Richard Kersley, strategist at Barclays de Zoete Wedd, commented: "The first reaction to figures is usually the wrong one. On the surface, the US numbers seem strong to us. I would have thought the market would have taken it a lot worse than it has done." Economists warned that the pressure to raise rates remained.

That did not trouble the London market, however, with many companies benefiting from a positive carry-over from results on Thursday. BTR was the best performer in the Footsie, climbing 16.5p to 276p on signs that sentiment may be changing towards the formerly unloved conglomerate.

Glaxo Wellcome, up another



39.5p to a new peak of £10.885, bathed in a sea of buy recommendations after promising double digit growth in 1999 the day before.

GKN wrongfooted many dealers, surging 46p to £10.20 despite the announcement late of Thursday of a record £601m damages award against the company in the US. Brokers breathed a sigh of relief, saying it could have been \$800m.

Bid hopes buoyed Rank, up 8.5p to 444p, and Ladbroke, where rumours of a bid from Hilton Corporation were revived. The shares put on 7p to 243p. However, another bid hopeful, Reckitt & Colman, fell back 16p to 807.5p after ABN

Amro Hoare Govett lowered its recommendation from buy to "undervalued".

BSkyB was also a casualty, ending 7p off at 616.5p after it pulled out of a pay-television joint venture with Germany's Kirch Group.

Some of the few results of the day saw forces, the tool hire turned computer services group, rise 6.5p to 76.5p after announcing a 178 per cent increase in profits. Greggs, the north-east bakery group, was also in fine fettle, gaining 12p to £16.45 after profits up a fifth.

Football stocks had a mixed end to the week. Birmingham City's debut on the Alternative Investment Market left many

punters happy, with the shares ending the day at 58p, a comfortable 8p premium to its launch price. Chelsea Village, owner of the London club, climbed 13.5p to 133.5p. But elsewhere, adverse press comment put Manchester United under pressure, with the 10p fall to 647.5p wiping out the previous day's gain.

Meanwhile, another 6.5p slide to 145p at Hay & Robertson, owner of the El Tel brand of replica football jerseys, forced it to issue a statement saying it had no reason to explain the fall in the group's shares over the past few days.

A month ago, they stood at 178.5p. Dealers blamed profit-taking by small investors. JKC Oil & Gas, the oil exploration tiddler chaired by former BP boss Sir Robert Horton, fell to a new low yesterday, diving 6p to 49p. The group has been under the cash since announcing a £14m rights

and deeper losses last week.

Roger Carey, who resigned as joint managing director of Slough Estates last year, popped up yesterday at the much smaller J Saville Gordon. In what looks like a reverse takeover, JSG is buying Rutland Industrial Estates, a property vehicle for Mr Carey and partner James McAlister, along with two industrial portfolios totalling £46.3m. Despite the accompanying rights at 55p a share, JSG slipped just 0.5p to 60p.

The placing of the late Viscountess Rothermere's 10.8 per cent stake in Daily Mail & General Trust, the newspaper group, went through smoothly in the hands of brokers UBS and Cazenove. The £15.80 realised for the A shares was at a tight discount to the £15.975 at which the shares stood when the deal was announced earlier in the week and on Thursday. They ended down just 5p at £15.925.

## Taking Stock

□ The market in Clyde Blowers' shares seems to have got over its initial indignation after last September's £12m cash call at 265p. Yesterday the shares were back on the way up to the 365p peak they hit last month, putting on 13.5p to 351p after the Clydebank engineering group unveiled two Chinese ash-handling contracts worth over £2m apiece.

□ Rumours that Kvernia West, the Irish zinc miner, is about to receive planning permission for the start of production at its Lisheen mine in County Tipperary continued to power the shares yesterday. Already up from 79p at the beginning of last month, they put on another 4p to a new high of 94p. Hopeful dealers suggest they could yet go to 150p.

## Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: ex rights = Ex-dividend as Ex rights; Unlisted Securities Market = Unlisted; pp = Partly Paid; pm = Paid Shares; \* AM Stock

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\*Lashley House, that are less than one year old

## **Dunwoody proves fitness for Flagship** **Racing option**

## Racing option for failed Cigar

"We'll have to see what the insurance company want to difficulties to lead active lives as successful stallions.

Imperial Cup Handicap Hurdle - Sandown 4.05					
Horse (Trainer/Weight)	Coral	William Hill	Ladbrokes	Total	
Silver Goose (R Aethun/14.5c12lb)	20-1	20-1	18-1	18-1	
Older's Sound (S Dwyer/14lb10lb)	33-1	25-1	28-1	28-1	
Kedwellford (R O'Leary/14.5c12lb)	33-1	33-1	33-1	33-1	
Yellow Dagger (M Walker/14.5c12lb)	14-1	18-1	12-1	14-1	
Starling (A H. Hamble/14.5c12lb)	7-1	13-2	7-1	8-1	
Shamrock (J McIndown/14.5c12lb)	25-1	25-1	28-1	28-1	
Express Girl (M M Reaveley/14.5c12lb)	20-1	25-1	18-1	20-1	
Kingstallford (M Haynes/14.5c14lb)	33-1	33-1	40-1	40-1	
Chin-Yo (J O'Neil/15lb)	14-1	14-1	14-1	10-1	
Shining Dancer (T Farmer/14.5c12lb)	10-1	10-1	14-1	9-1	
Mr Percy (J O'Leary/14.5c12lb)	20-1	15-1	14-1	14-1	
Ground Nut (R Buckner/14.5c11lb)	40-1	40-1	33-1	33-1	
Declan (M Pigg/14.5c12lb)	3-1	3-1	3-1	3-1	
Many Dances (M O'Leary/14.5c12lb)	2-1	2-1	2-1	2-1	
Forward (S Gifford/14.5c12lb)	14-1	13-2	12-1	12-1	
Cardiff Intimate (P Webster/14.5c12lb)	11-1	11-1	12-1	12-1	
Dandelion (M Channon/14.5c12lb)	16-1	20-1	14-1	16-1	
Semerald (Nass L Scott/14.5c12lb)	25-1	25-1	33-1	33-1	

Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3, 4

Ten To Follow Handicap Chase - Chepstow 1.45			
Nome (Trainer/weight)	Carroll	William Hill	Total
Bishops Hall (R Aimer/12st)	12-3	10-1	11-1
Belmont King (P Nichol/12st)	5-1	9-2	5-5
Rockbrook Bounce (G Richards/12st)	5-1	8-1	9-2
General Wreath (T Forster/1st12st)	6-4	8-4	6-4
Givattine (A Turner/10st11lb)	11-4	13-4	14-4
Swaffington (J Gilford/10st)	20-1	14-1	20-1
See Enough (R Butler/10st)	14-1	20-1	20-1

Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2

Singspiel, the Canadian In-

11-11-68

# FESTIVAL FOCUS: Cornwall's quiet surroundings are shaping a farmer's Gold Cup dreams



Man's best friends: Walter Dennis shares the affection between Coome Hill and his trusty farm dog outside his stables in Cornwall

Photograph: Peter Jay

## Coome Hill chasing a fairy tale

It is strange the way the mind plays tricks on you. When I was a boy and we went on holiday to Bude and stayed in something my parents called a mobile home and everyone else called a caravan, Cornwall seemed an awful long way away. I now realise it's further than that.

You start by screaming along roads which have the familiar ring of M4 and M5, and end up going down something with a number that looks like it should be embroidered on the breast pocket of a Dartmoor lifer. The people of Bude delight in the belief that their town is the furthest away from a dual carriageway than any other in England.

This week the old port has not looked at its best, the damp weather lending it the charm that all mass-appeal resorts have in the drizzle. By next Thursday, however, despite its remoteness and seasonal inhospitality, Bude may be the site of pilgrimage, a destination to compare with Hamelin, the Emerald City and Lilliput as the seat of an implausible fairy story.

Just one mile from the town centre, on the southern fringes and barely into countryside, lies Thorne Farm, a mixed estate dealing in sheep, cattle and cereals. Most immediately of all, though, the premises are dealing in dreams as the home of Coome Hill, the former point-to-point and current home of the little man's standard, as he is prepared for the Cheltenham Gold Cup. If

the eight-year-old wins at the Festival on Thursday afternoon, agonists will be shaken.

It was just four years ago that Coome Hill was standing in an Irish field when a chap called Walter Dennis came to visit. The horse was backward, lean and weak, but Dennis liked him and took him back to Cornwall. Neither set of locals were to look too kindly on this transaction. Coome Hill was soon to prove a bargain, crushing his point-to-point opponents at places crisscrossed such as Liskeard, Tavistock and Launceston.

This season he has started beating on the big boys, winning his four completed starts, including a Hennessy Gold Cup, and finally those who think of him and his trainer as a bucolic peculiarity have had to zip their lips.

Walter Dennis is 56 and has occupied Thorne Farm for 26 years now. He was born just over the River Tamar in Devon and has become quite used to having a four-legged friend around the place.

"I rode in my first point-to-point when I was 16," said Dennis, who partnered about 70 winners between the flags. "There has never been a period when I didn't have a horse around. If you spend 40 years with horses and haven't learned much in that time, you've got to be thick. If you just open your eyes you must learn something."

With his benign features, forested crown and reading

Richard Edmondson finds small is big when preparing for Cheltenham glory

spectacles, Dennis could easily pass for a figure whose tone of reference was not the form book but rather the Bible. His hands have come from the agriculturalists' warehouse - great big wrinkly things that look as though they have been inflated by a bike pump.

Walter Dennis is no yokel to be spoofed, though. In fact, he does the lampooning of various puffed-up characters with microphones he has had to endure this campaign. Dennis does not respond warmly to those who talk down to either him or his horse.

In the build-up to the Hennessy, Graham Goodie, the Channel 4 commentator, speculated that Coome Hill might make a nice paperweight but was probably not up to the Newbury race. It was an opinion he lived to regret. "He hasn't got a very discreet way of

putting things," Dennis said before completing an early attempt at the 1997 oxymoron of the year. "He's a prat."

They like smoking at Thorne Farm. In fact there appears a near-religious ideal that the flame of a cigarette end should be burning at all times between them. Coome Hill, too, would have a puff behind the hind

quarters if you let him, and this natural sludger has to be galvanised in all his work. When he deserves a rest, the gelding is taken down to Summerleaze beach and Walter Dennis

tears down the strand like El Cid. "It's relaxation for us both," he says. "But you can have lots of alterations with women with dogs and people flying kites."

Dennis actually trains his horse far more personally than the big boys treat any individual animal at their factory units. He believes this has helped

Coome Hill. "I think if horses go to big yards they can get institutionalised, ripping up and down the gallops every day and walking around like sheep behind one another," he said.

"My horse is an individual and probably appreciates the environment he is in. Maybe somebody else would have raced his arse off by now and he would be a spent force."

There is certainly more emotion invested in Coome Hill by his trainer/owner than in most other turf relationships. "We don't regard him as a pet and when he works he really has to work, but he does mean an awful lot to us," Dennis says.

"I care for him day in and day out and take him to the races, so I'd be a bit of a weirdo if I didn't have any feelings for him. All that really matters to us is that he comes back from Cheltenham in one piece. We worry for him out there."

Dennis desperately does not want to sound like a big head, probably because he has met plenty of those in parade rings this campaign and realised what an unappealing bunch they are. Yet, subliminally, he tells you he likes the way his horse has been working and his chances overall.

Outside, where light rain seems to have been falling all day, Dennis swears playfully in Coome Hill's box as if it is a pork scratching. The permit-holder piles on the blankets and duvets until the gelding looks like a carpet trader's goods camel on the way to the souk.

Team Dennis has been staggered by the packs of journalists, both broadcast and written, that have descended on their home this past few weeks (and knowing some of the family I understand the ordeal they have been through).

Their story has the same resonance of 1996, when another dairy farmer, Dyfed's Sirriell Griffiths, led in his 100-1 shot Norton's Coin after the Gold Cup. The Welshman observed the brotherhood of the milk by ringing yesterday to offer his best wishes.

The telephone has been bouncing from other figures in recent weeks - those interested in purchasing Coome Hill. All have been repelled. "Someone once wrote, 'Since you've been away, I've cried and cried all day', and that sums up how important he is to the family," Dennis says.

"I'm not rich, but then again I'm not poor, and he does mean an awful lot to us."

This decision has been greeted less than gloriously by the family bank manager. "We're talking offers here that would make your hair crawl," the trainer adds.

One such bid, and we are probably talking a £200,000 downpayment, came from one of the sport's high-flyers, and he did not even want to take the horse away. Walter Dennis suggests he would rather this man's name was not printed, "or I'll have your balls off." Sometimes fearless journalism is best left to Woodward and Bernstein.

## Slaney back in the running for world record

Mike Rowbottom on the American athlete who has found her old self again

When Mary Slaney - then Decker - was 12 years old, she ran a marathon, a quarter-mile, a mile and a two-mile race in the space of seven days.

Not the sort of regime to guarantee a long career in athletics, you would have thought. And yet, 26 years later, the greatest United States middle distance runner of all time is here in Paris seeking the world indoor 1500 metres title and a 17th world indoor best.

Regrets? She's had a few, and mentioned them - most notoriously after the 1984 Olympic 3,000m final when she fell after colliding with Zola Budd. Her histrionics thereafter earned her the title of "Whiner of the Year" from one US newspaper.

But if her voice has been raised in complaint, there has been much to complain about, at least in terms of bad luck and injury.

Although she earned "Double Decker" headlines after taking the 1500 and 3000m titles in the inaugural World Championships of 1983, her Slaney: Efforts rewarded

after has been ill-starred. She has not taken part in any World Championships, indoor or out, since then, and her record in the Olympics is an unhappy one. She was considered too young for the US trials before the 1972 Olympics, missed 1976 with injury, 1980 through a boycott, fell in 1984 and has had her performances in 1988, 1992 and 1996 undermined by illness.

Slaney's operations have kept her away from the track for 19 months, three years ago, virtually reconstructed an Achilles tendon. Although she feared she would never compete again, she returned to win a place at last year's Olympics, but her fitness was undermined by a condition she subsequently discovered to be exercise-induced asthma.

## Loose move by Copp

trip to Pakistan, with the final round of games being played on Sunday 6 April.

Copp has made one change to the squad who beat Teddington last Sunday, the schoolboy international Jon Loe coming in for Chris Willis. Copp expects a hard game against Guildford.

With Jennis (Jan Jennings) individual corner threat you can never relax," Copp said. "I watched as a spectator the game at Guildford before Christmas when we threw away a two-goal lead and they came back at us to win 5-1. I'm, however, confident we can sort them out."

Paddy Osborne has been added to Reading's 30 players named for the European Cup at Easter. It seems likely that he will make the final 16 for his potential at penalty corners.

## Towers ready to reel in their rivals

London Towers, fresh from victory in last weekend's 7-Up League Trophy final, must begin reeling in the challengers for their Budweiser League title this weekend when the table's top four clubs meet.

Towers, in second place with Sheffield Sharks, are at home to joint leaders Leyton Leopards tomorrow. Tonight Sheffield visit Birmingham Bulls, who share top place with the Leopards.

Birmingham's Nick Nurse, February's coach of the month, whose team have won 12 games in a row, said: "We've jumped on people early and stayed in front, but we won't have that luxury against Sheffield."

Towers have three games in hand over Leopards and Birmingham and one over the Sharks. Leopards' American guard Eric Burks was rested from Thursday's 93-83 win over Worthing Bears because of a thigh strain, and returns against the Towers.

Leopards lifted the National Cup in January, and their coach, Billy Mims, said: "It's one of the League's great rivalries between us and Towers and it should get even bigger now both of us have some silverware."

## Quotes of the week

■ "Maybe we'll have to decide this on penalties. But we'll win because we've got two goalkeepers. Bruce Grobbelaar, after the jury in the match-fixing trial was discharged."

■ "It was like the 1950s all over again. Paddy Crenan, midfielder in the great 60s side."

■ "The worst 20 minutes of my life. Jack Rowell, England rugby, by union coach, on France's comeback against England at Twickenham."

■ "Matt Le Tissier said to me, 'We can't understand why you're not playing all the time. It's crazy. Have you stolen his wife or something?' David Gillett, the Newcastle winger, on his relationship with his manager, Kenny Dalglish."

■ "I don't want a bunch of good-looking prime donors turning up to compete in our race. I want real men in real machines. Ron Walker, chairman of the Australian Grand Prix Board, in the run-up to the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne."

■ "As of today we are probably the richest rugby league club in the world. Jack Robinson, Wigan chairman, on the sale of Central Park to a supermarket."

## RACING RESULTS

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## PUNTERS' GUIDE TO CHELTENHAM

In Monday's Independent: An essential race-by-race guide to the Festival, with betting advice and up-to-date fields for every race, all the latest odds on offer, and an assessment of the Irish challenge

## WOLVERHAMPTON

HYPERION	
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## sport



**FA CUP:** Wrexham's road to Chesterfield for tomorrow's sixth-round tie has been an arduous one, with the Welsh side coming from behind on eight occasions. **Phil Shaw** meets the men behind an extraordinary run of success

# 'Racecourse Three' target last four

The switchboard is flashing fit to catch fire. Television crews trawl the corridors. No sooner has the driver delivering lager from the sponsors popped in to wish him luck than Brian Flynn is interrupted by a secretary asking about donating a bull for Red Nose Day. "It's like a crew station," sighs the Wrexham manager. Correction: it is like a fire drill in a madhouse.

The reason for the clamour is the Welsh club's FA Cup sixth-round match at Chesterfield tomorrow, a tie which guarantees that a team from the Second (and Third) Division will feature in the semi-finals for the first time in 13 years.

Now Wrexham have staged several great European nights and count Arsenal among numerous prestigious scalps, but they have never played at Wembley. Never mind lager, you could almost bottle the adrenalin coursing round the Racecourse Ground.

The fact that Flynn and his confidants in the Wrexham "boot room", Joey Jones and Kevin Reeves, have seen it all before does not make them

**'It was the result [against Arsenal] that turned everything round for Wrexham'**

immune to the excitement. As players they won a total of 140 caps and commanded £3m in transfer fees. Wrexham have neither the resources nor the support of the big-city clubs each once represented, so success on a national scale would probably be the most satisfying achievement of their lives.

Although none of the "Racecourse Three" gained an FA Cup winner's medal, Reeves, the assistant manager, scored for Manchester City in their defeat by Tottenham in the 1981 final, while Jones, the coach, lost with Liverpool against Manchester United four years earlier. Flynn, like Wrexham, is a stranger to the semi-finals yet not to the competition's capacity to inspire emotional extremes. Shortly after he broke into Burnley's midfield, in 1974, they contested a place in the last four with a Wrexham team which included Jones, a fellow teenager and colleague-to-be in the Welsh national side. Flynn watched from the stand as a "wicked deflection... off Arfon Griffiths I think" took the Lancashire club to an unsuccessful semi-final.

The following year he made his Cup debut. Burnley were chasing the League championship and had home advantage: Wimbledon were South-



Joey Jones (left), Brian Flynn and Kevin Reeves (right), the Wrexham management team who have revived the Welsh club's fortunes

Photograph: David Ashdown

ern League part-timers. "They beat us 1-0 and our dressing-room was like a morgue afterwards," Flynn recalls.

"There was a knock on the door and this gentleman from Wimbledon came in saying: 'We'd like you to have these as a souvenir'."

"He gave us these Wembley shampoos, based on the characters from the kids' TV show, Zedee was it? Anyway, it was a lovely gesture. Needless to say it didn't go down too well at the time."

Jones, meanwhile, moved to Anfield - after a fashion. His new club found him accommodation, but the pull of the old town proved too powerful. "I'd kept on my digs in Wrexham," he explains, "so what I did was move back here and paid the land-

lady in Liverpool the £9 rent every week so that she wouldn't tell Bob Paisley!"

It became a recurring theme during a career that featured three spells with Wrexham, spanning the best and worst of times. "I just love the place. When me and Mickey Thomas played for Chelsea we used to commute from North Wales, setting off at 5am. We were often first in for training. Other times we kipped down in the kit room. Now that I'm back here, a mile down the road, I'm always late."

Memories of 1977, if ultimately regretful, encourage Jones to believe that Wrexham can go all the way in '97. "We [Liverpool] were a bit lucky to get a draw with Everton be-

fore beating them in the semi. I still don't know why Clive Thomas disallowed Bryan Hamilton's 'goal'. The best team in the country wins the League, but you don't have to be the best to win the Cup."

Like Flynn, he has one skeleton in the Cup closet, a terrible chasing by Clive Walker at Chelsea. "I had a nightmare," Jones admits. "It was the third round and we lost 4-2 - exactly the same as this year - and I seemed to take most of the blame." He never played for Liverpool again.

Never anyone in Derbyshire begins to suspect that the trio are jinxed, Reeves actually owed his biggest break to the Cup. Malcolm Allison, rebuilding Manchester City after being knocked out at Halifax, paid

Norwich £1m for the young striker who would go on to play twice for England. Allison's time at City was almost up, but they made it to Wembley under John Bond the following May.

"We were the better side in the first game with Spurs," Reeves says. "I remember Steve Mackenzie hitting the post after shooting with the outside of his right foot when he could have sidefooted it in. We'd have been 2-0 and it would probably have been all over, but then Tommy Hutch [Hutchinson] scored an own goal from a position he was never supposed to be in."

The replay will forever be the Ricky Villa final. So why wasn't Reeves tracking back to stop the Ar-

gentinian's slalom through City's defence? "I'd given away a penalty against Arsenal on my debut," he laughs, "and after that I thought: 'There's no way I'm going back there again.'"

Flynn and Reeves became acquainted after the former's return from Leeds to Burnley, where he still lives. Not long after they joined forces with Jones at Wrexham in 1989 (Flynn may not know his *Wrexham* from his *Wrexham* but he is the League's fourth longest-serving manager), the club flirted with relegation to the Vauxhall Conference. A year later, with demotion temporarily scrapped, they came bottom.

Salvation came in the form of a

youth policy modelled on the one which produced their own manager at Turf Moor. Five years ago, driven on by the veteran Mickey Thomas, the team who had finished 92nd turfed the champions, Arsenal, out of the Cup. "It was the result that turned everything round for Wrexham," Flynn says.

That run ended in a home replay defeat by West Ham. This year, when the tables were turned at Upton Park, the London club alone have failed to lead Wrexham. Incredibly, they have been behind eight times on the road to Chesterfield. Once to Colwyn Bay ("we equalised late on and were glad of a replay," Flynn confesses), no fewer than four times in two meetings with Scunthorpe, twice at Peterborough ("my bogey ground") and again at Birmingham ("our best performance in my time here").

Steve Watkins, match-winner against Messrs Seaman, Adams and Co, is one of the Flynn fledglings who will be involved this weekend. He may be partnered by Gary Bennett, 33, a prolific scorer in his previous spell at

**'If we started the match at midnight on Thursday it would still be fantastic'**

Wrexham who came "home" from Preston last week after rejecting an offer from Chesterfield, of all clubs.

The most coveted new face is Bryan Hughes, an ex-trainee and frequent marksman from midfield, but not, his patriotic manager had to concede after a trawl through the Merseysider's family tree, remotely Welsh. Flynn, who makes no secret of an ambition to manage his country, regards his team as carrying the Red Dragon. "Oh yes, and very proud of it."

His squad divides fairly evenly between Welsh and English players. Hence the Racecourse tradition of the Friday "international", a five-a-side game between teams captained by Jones and Reeves. "It can be a bit fiery," the Englishman says, his expression a cross between a grin and a grimace. "A few tackles flying about."

Flynn anticipates that tomorrow's Anglo-Welsh confrontation is likely to be "very tense, because the stakes are so high." The ludicrous kick-off time (the police have insisted on 11.30am) will not, he insists, detract from the occasion. "It's the FA Cup quarter-final for heaven's sake," he says, like a true believer. "If we started at midnight on Thursday it would still be fantastic."

There's something very relaxing about supporting a team which has meandered its way gently from disappointment to disappointment since leaving the First Division - what we still like to think of as our natural home - 38 years ago.

Of course, there has been the odd shock emanating from Fratton Park to disturb our equanimity. Not being relegated from the First last season was a bit of a shock. Almost as exciting as winning promotion from the old Fourth Division in 1983 with a 2-2 draw at Northampton in the last match of the season. I reminisced about that with the manager of the day, Frank Bur-

## Pompey's life and chimes through Dickinson to Venables

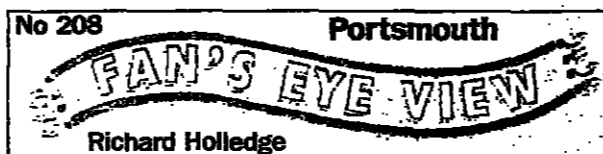
rows, in a Cardiff restaurant a few years ago.

But who needs excitement? As a friend who supports St Mirren encouragingly told me, the positive thing about supporting a side going nowhere is that you have few expectations. Lose or draw, it hardly matters. A win, and it's time for a chorus of the *Pompey Chimes* and a quick lie-down. That's why I've been suffering from PMT for so long - Post Match Torpor.

It did get a little exciting in

1992 when we reached the semi of the FA Cup against Liverpool only to lose on penalties. It was excruciating in 1993 when Jim Smith's brilliant young team failed to be promoted even though Guy Whittingham scored about 500 goals.

No, it's so much more comforting to reflect on the heady days of the Sixties, when such sterling characters as Phil Gunter, Harry Harris, Ron Saunders, Reg Cutler, a winger who seemed to specialise in



own goals and the inestimable Jimmy Dickinson ushered the club on its headlong decline into mediocrity.

Then there were a spate of glamour signings such as Mike Trebilcock (flash and useless), Peter Marinello (flashier and just

as useless) and Norman Piper (who?). I always had a soft spot for centre-forward Ray Hiron.

So these are demanding days for Pompey fans with long memories and a penchant for the quiet life, what with being unbeaten in nine games, inch-

ing towards the play-offs and heading for FA Cup glory at Wembley.

Not many people will remember this but we beat Chelsea - tomorrow's opponents in the quarter-finals - in the first year of the old League Cup in 1961. Portsmouth were mauling around in the bottom half of the old Second Division, hopeless, hapless, doomed. Their opponents, a glamorous First Division side, sported one J Greaves up front,

the glare of the enemy searchlights.

The crowd for the Chelsea game was 13,000. Tomorrow there will be a capacity 15,500 in what is now an old, tired ground. The Pompey Chimes will reverberate over the terraced streets of the city and the chairman, one T Venables, will be looking on this time as his young, fast, hard working team, Paul Hall, Fitzroy Simpson, Lee Bradbury and Alan Knight in goal give those city slickers a black eye Dick Beattie would have been proud of.

And that'll be quite enough excitement for one year, thank you very much.

# BEHONEST. YOU NEED IT.

## XL FOR MEN

Because you only live once

ON SALE MARCH 7

WEEKEND FIXTURES AND POOLS GUIDE

TODAY

3.0 unless stated

FA Cup quarter-final

- Derby v Middlesbrough

FA Carling Premiership

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	26	16	8	3	56	31	57
Liverpool	26	15	8	3	56	21	53
Arsenal	26	14	9	6	47	26	51
Manchester	26	14	8	4	46	26	50
Newcastle	27	14	6	7	51	31	48
Aston Villa	26	13	7	9	35	27	46
Sheff Wed	26	11	12	3	37	22	45
Wimbledon	27	11	8	7	39	32	44
Chelsea	27	11	10	6	42	38	43
Leicester	26	10	13	3	35	38	43
Everton	26	10	12	4	33	31	38
Tottenham	26	10	8	8	35	38	38
Leeds	26	10	6	10	32	42	33
Blackburn	27	7	11	9	28	26	32
Derby	26	7	11	11	34	47	31
Coventry	29	7	12	12	26	39	29
Sunderland	26	7	8	13	23	38	29
Nottm Forest	26	7	8	13	34	47	27
Southampton	27	6	7	14	37	48	27
West Ham	27	6	7	14	34	37	27
Middlesbrough	27	6	7	14	37	49	26

- Middlesbrough deducts three points

1 Arsenal v Nottingham Forest.....	16 Luton v Millwall.....
2 Leeds v Everton.....	17 Notts County v Crewe.....
3 Sunderland v Manchester United.....	18 Plymouth v Rotherham.....
- Coventry v Leicester.....	19 Preston v Brentford.....
	20 Stockport v Bury.....
	21 Walsall v Shrewsbury.....
	22 Wycombe v Bristol Rovers.....
	23 York v Blackpool.....

Nationwide Football League

First Division

4 Birmingham v Southend.....	24 Brighton v Leyton Orient.....
5 Bolton v Swindon.....	25 Chester v Barnet.....
6 Bradford City v Gillingham.....	26 Doncaster v Hull.....
7 Charlton v Crystal Palace.....	27 Fulham v Scarborough.....
8 Manchester City v Oldham.....	28 Huddersfield v Northampton.....
9 Norwich City v Port Vale.....	29 Lincoln v Hartlepool.....
10 Oxford v West Brom.....	30 Mansfield v Cardiff.....
11 QPR v Huddersfield.....	31 Rochdale v Wigan.....
12 Stoke v Ipswich.....	32 Scunthorpe v Carlisle.....
13 Wolves v Tranmere.....	33 Swindon v Exeter.....

Second Division

14 Burnley v Peterborough.....	34 Torquay v Darlington.....
15 Gillingham v Watford.....	

35 Aldershot v Woking.....	41 Torquay v Darlington.....
36 Kidderminster v Hereford.....	42 Welling v Macclesfield.....
37 Kidderminster v Hereford.....	
38 Southport v Farnborough.....	
39 Stalybridge v Altrincham.....	
38 Stevenage v Northwich.....	
39 Telford v Slough.....	
40 Welling v Macclesfield.....	

Third Division

41 Brighton v Leyton Orient.....	46 Aberdeen v Dundee.....
42 Chester v Barnet.....	47 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....
43 Doncaster v Hull.....	48 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....
44 Fulham v Scarborough.....	49 Morton v Kilmarnock.....
45 Huddersfield v Northampton.....	
46 Lincoln v Hartlepool.....	
47 Mansfield v Cardiff.....	
48 Rochdale v Wigan.....	
49 Scunthorpe v Carlisle.....	
50 Swindon v Exeter.....	
51 Torquay v Darlington.....	

GM Vauxhall Conference

41 Bath v Bromsgrove.....	46 Aberdeen v Dundee.....
42 Chester v Barnet.....	47 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....
43 Doncaster v Hull.....	48 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....
44 Fulham v Scarborough.....	49 Morton v Kilmarnock.....
45 Huddersfield v Northampton.....	
46 Lincoln v Hartlepool.....	
47 Mansfield v Cardiff.....	
48 Rochdale v Wigan.....	
49 Scunthorpe v Carlisle.....	
50 Swindon v Exeter.....	
51 Torquay v Darlington.....	

Tenants Scottish Cup

Fifth round

41 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....	46 Aberdeen v Dundee.....
42 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....	47 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....
43 Morton v Kilmarnock.....	48 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....

Bell's Scottish League

Premier Division

41 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....	46 Aberdeen v Dundee.....
42 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....	47 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....
43 Morton v Kilmarnock.....	48 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....

First Division

41 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....	46 Aberdeen v Dundee.....
42 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....	47 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....
43 Morton v Kilmarnock.....	48 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....

Second Division

41 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....	46 Aberdeen v Dundee.....
42 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....	47 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....
43 Morton v Kilmarnock.....	48 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....

Third Division

41 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....	46 Aberdeen v Dundee.....
42 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....	47 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....
43 Morton v Kilmarnock.....	48 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....

TOMORROW

FA Cup quarter-finals

41 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....	46 Aberdeen v Dundee.....
42 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....	47 Dundee Utd v Motherwell.....
43 Morton v Kilmarnock.....	48 Falkirk v Raith Rovers.....

TEAM SHEET

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

 Arsenal v Nottm Forest	 Leeds United v Everton
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Last season: 1-1. Last five League matches: Arsenal DDLW, Nottm Forest LLDLW. Adams and Henson are fit to return for Arsenal but Wright and Gould start two-match suspensions. Forest's Allen injured his hamstring in mid-week and is replaced by Woon.

Last season: 2-2. Last five League matches: Leeds DDLWW, Everton LWDL. Leeds' Kelly and Radcliffe are suspended and Dorr and Walsby are doubtful with hamstring strains. Deane is fit. Grant is out for Everton, with Barry and Ferguson likely to continue up front.

 Coventry City v Leicester City
--

Last season: No figure. Last five League matches: Coventry DDLW, Leicester DDLWW. Dublin moves back to the centre of defence for Coventry. Williams and Richardson are expected to be fit. Heskey (ankle), Pinn (thigh) and Robins (ankle) face fitness tests for Leicester.

 Sunderland v Manchester Utd
---

Last season: No figure. Last five League matches: Sunderland DDLW, Man Utd WWLW. Sunderland include Stewart and Agnew but Smith (knee) is ruled out. Patterson and May are expected to be fit for United. Johnson is likely to start in defence. Keane is suspended and Butt injured.

FA CUP

 Derby County v Middlesbrough	 Portsmouth v Chelsea
--	--

Last five League matches: Derby DDLWW, Middlesbrough LWDL. Derby's Williams came in for Saragosa. Powell is back and Taylor starts in goal. Emerson (ankle) and Kinder (ankle) are ruled out for Middlesbrough, who have Robinson in goal for the cup-tie. Schweinsteiger and Patee face late fitness tests.

Last five League matches: Portsmouth WWLWD, Chelsea WWLWD. Portsmouth's Patrick is available after suspension. McCulloch is set to be pushed in place of Cook. Mark Hughes and Zola are likely to stay at attack for Chelsea. Petrescu, Johnson and Cleary have been passed fit. Gracia continues to goal.

 Sheff Wed v Wimbledon
---

Last five League matches: Sheff Wed DDLWW, Wimbledon DWLWD. Sheff Wed's Cofield is set to continue up front but Hens, Ayala and Whittingham are battling to be fit. Captain Jones is one of several Wimbledon players who have recovered from injury. Leoni

 Sheff Wed v Wimbledon
---

Last five League matches: Sheff Wed DDLWW, Wimbledon DWLWD. Sheff Wed's Cofield is set to continue up front but Hens, Ayala and Whittingham are battling to be fit. Captain Jones is one of several Wimbledon players who have recovered from injury. Leoni



**Tilt at the title**  
Keith Elliott talks to two  
pinball perfectionists, page 29

**sport**

**Up for the Cup**  
Phil Shaw meets the men  
behind Wrexham, page 30

# Kipketer destroys 800 metres record

## Athletics

MIKE ROWBOTTOM  
reports from Paris

Wilson Kipketer generated delight and disbelief in equal measure at the world indoor championships here yesterday by taking nearly a second off the world 800 metres record in his first round of racing, stopping the clock at 1min 43.96sec.

That all changed as he glanced up at the huge screen after his first 200 metres lap of the Palais Omnisports track and noticed his split time of 25 seconds.

"When I saw that, and nobody was following me, I thought - OK, I have to go for it," said Kipketer, who thus became the first athlete to claim the \$50,000 (£31,000) bonus on offer for world records at this championships.

Should he run faster in today's semi-final or Sunday's final, he would not receive further bonus awards. But, unless anyone else runs faster this weekend, he has already assured himself of a first instal-

ment which looks certain to be matched by a further \$50,000 for winning the event.

"It is good to eliminate problems," he said with a broad grin. "Now I have only one thing to think about, that is winning the gold medal. I do not need to run a world record again. One problem at a time..."

"It was the first time a world record had been beaten in the first round of an individual event at any world championships. It was not my plan to demolish the field or the record. I set out simply to run a safe race."

But his plan changed on the hoof as, beautifully easy in his movement, he took an immediate lead and drew away from

the labouring mortals behind him.

Asked if he was surprised to have taken such a large amount off the record, Ereng had set at the 1989 world indoor championships in Budapest, Kipketer replied: "I could say yes or no. I didn't know I was going to break the world record, so yes I was surprised, but I was also not surprised because I have been training in the United States for two months with my coach Mike Bolt and I knew I was in very good shape."

Asked if he would be bothered to run at these championships had prize money not been made available for the first time, he replied: "Yes, I was

going to race here and it doesn't matter if there is money or not."

"I think you could call that my perfect race because I knew nobody was pressurising me and I could control everything."

He would not be drawn on reflecting upon his bitter experience last year, when he was unable to run at the Olympics because his Danish nationality has not been fully established.

After his performance in running 1min 41.83sec, the third fastest 800m in history, last season, Kipketer looks eminently capable of proving a point at this summer's world championships - for which he is eligible - by beating the Norwegian who won the Olympic ti-

tle in his absence, Vegjorn Rodal. But he did not want to talk too much about that yesterday either.

"We cannot talk about the summer before we reach the summer," he said. "We are here, we are in the winter."

Which was a perfectly fine place to be here yesterday. Jamie Baulch and Ashtin Hansen, both of whom came to grief in their last appearances at the Palais Omnisports three years ago, took confident strides towards their respective finals.

Baulch, running with the tactical assurance that he lacked at the European indoor championships here in 1994, when he tripped and fell in the final, won

his opening heat in 46.52sec.

The 23-year-old Welshman admitted that he was thinking about his unhappy experience before his race. "I was thinking, 'Oh God! Here we are again. This is the track'."

Happily for him he came through. Happily for his family, too. A party of eight are due to arrive to watch him today - mother, father, two aunts, two uncles, his girlfriend Susannah and 18-month-old son, Jay.

Baulch was accompanied into today's semi-finals by Mark Hyton, who won his heat in 47.58. Hansen, back in the team on appeal after being left out originally because she had missed the trials, qualified for tomorrow's triple jump final at her first attempt with 14.24 metres.

That ended an unfortunate sequence in indoor championships - she failed to qualify here in 1994, did the same at the 1995 world indoors, and failed to register a mark at last year's European indoors.

Jason Livingston's hopes of winning a medal in the 60 metres ended with a first round defeat. Livingston, the first athlete to make a British team after returning from a four-year doping ban, could only manage 6.70sec and will have to be content with his achievement in winning the British vest which he says he intends to frame.

Results, page 31

## Ferrari set the target for rivals

## Motor racing

DAVID TREMAYNE  
reports from Melbourne

Relief mingled with caution here as the preliminary shots were finally fired in the battle for the 1997 world championship, which begins with tomorrow's Australian Grand Prix.

The relief came as some sort of perspective began to emerge during the first day of practice after the most confusing and inconclusive off-season in recent years had thrown up far more questions than answers regarding the relative performances of the leading contenders.

Caution might have been expected from the drivers after environmental protestors had deposited diesel oil on key corners of the Albert Park circuit. However, they failed to make any further impact and the drivers' reticence was evident not in the way they attacked the circuit but in their interpretation of the first day's running. Michael Schumacher finished the day in control by half a second for a Ferrari team which, according to the jungle drums, had been troubled for much of its testing programme.

"Our work went according to plan and our aim today was to find a good set-up both for qualifying and for the race," Ferrari's sporting director, Jean Todt, said. "But let's not get carried away. We know what level of fuel we were carrying, but what

about our rivals? This we will not know about for sure until qualifying."

This is a traditional uncertainty on the first day, when cars do not always run in full qualifying trim during free practice, which does not count for grid places. However, this year there is the added complication of the tyre war between the established kings of Goodyear and the new pretenders, Bridgestone.

Drivers must now evaluate the performance of different compound tyres, and to do that some teams choose to run with a heavier fuel load, which can produce a misleading result by slowing them artificially. Having made their choice of tyres for free practice, they must thereafter stick with it for qualifying and the race. Thus it was also hard to draw hard and fast conclusions, since nobody could be quite certain who was running what.

"Couple that with the fuel situation - maybe we had less than the others, maybe not - and coming first today is a meaningless prize," Schumacher admitted. However, he said it with the air of a man whose machinery had surprised him. Certainly, it surprised others.

Schumacher's great rival and fellow German, Heinz-Harald Frentzen, who has replaced Damon Hill in the dominant Williams-Renault team, barely had time to savour the achievement of lapping faster than his colleague Jacques Villeneuve for the first time, when Schu-



Michael Schumacher on his way to setting the fastest time yesterday on the first day of practice for tomorrow's Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne

Photograph: Alisport

macher beat his best time by half a second.

"It's pretty nice to be that far up the order," Frentzen grinned in acknowledgement of the plaudits, but he was not about to let anything go to his head. "It's very early right now. Friday is a day just for sorting all the things like tyres out. I don't think the times matter."

However, Villeneuve's final lap was significantly quicker than Schumacher's at the two intermediate measurement points. The 25-year-old Canadian, favourite for the title after finishing second to Hill last season, made two errors in the final segment and watched the best lap time slip away.

Hill's under-developed TWR

Arrows Yamaha is clearly no match yet for his old team's quick new cars, but he remained philosophical. Relaxed, and outwardly resigned to the need to pay further dues before he can push himself back to the respectable end of the grid, the world champion even found time to joke when his specially tailored driving seat was delayed in customs.

"First I lose my seat at Williams," he said, "and now I lose my Arrows seat as well." Until a gearbox failure brought him to a premature halt in the morning Hill had momentarily set the fastest time in the early running when his Bridgestone tyres were at their best against the Goodyears of the Williams and Ferrari drivers.

He expressed himself happy with 13th fastest time overall, which was rather better than some had predicted for a car that has suffered persistent teething troubles. "In all honesty I think that if we can qualify two and a half seconds away from the front of the grid that would be a good result for us right now," he said.

Hill will not have missed another noteworthy performance, however. Ralf Schumacher lapped within a second of his brother's fastest time to take fifth place, in the elite company of Jean Alesi and Villeneuve, driving the improved Jordan-Peugeot that Hill turned down in favour of the Arrows.

Hill interview, page 28

## Everton poised to clinch £5m Bilic signing

## Football

ALAN NIXON

Everton were last night rushing through the £5m transfer of West Ham's Slaven Bilic in time to have the centre-half signed before the transfer deadline.

The 28-year-old Croatian in-

ternational met Goodison Park officials last night after deciding to leave Upton Park following talks earlier in the day, exploiting an escape clause in his contract in preference for a deal worth an estimated £1m a year.

Everton are keen to have Bilic's signature quickly as they will need to process a work permit

application before he can play. However, that should be arranged in the three weeks left for signings eligible to play this season.

The Newcastle manager Kenny Dalglish yesterday tried to play down reports of a training ground argument with David Ginola. The 15-minute

confrontation was witnessed by fans on Thursday.

"The players sat on the grass and we had a meeting," Dalglish said yesterday. "Ginola was one of the players that was spoken to but we're not going to disclose what's involved in discussions between myself and players."

The Football Association has played down reports that England coach Glenn Hoddle has set up a crisis meeting with Premiership managers.

Hoddle was reported to have planned a summit with Alex Ferguson, Kenny Dalglish and Roy Evans in an attempt to avoid the withdrawal of many

of his players from this summer's internationals.

"Although the England manager talks with all club managers on a regular basis, there is no planned summit," an FA spokesman said. Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, said yesterday that any of his players selected would take part.

## Brawling clubs fined

Crystal Palace and Norwich have both been fined £40,000 for the 21-player brawl at Carrow Road in December. The two First Division clubs admitted to a charge of "failing to control their players" and apologised unreservedly to the Football Association.

The match referee, Kevin Lynch, described the incident at the time as the worst he had seen in professional football. The Crystal Palace chairman, Ron Noades, said: "The hearing was fair and I think we got a good deal." The FA committee watched video and photographic evidence before concluding that the clubs should be fined rather than docked points.

The FA spokesman, Steve Double, said: "The financial

punishments we have levied are not unsubstantial and today's case will hopefully be a deterrent."

The deterrent comes too late for Chesterfield and Plymouth, who both face an identical charge following the brawl during their game at Saltergate last month. Four players were sent off in the incident.

The FA have said they will take "seriously" any complaint made to them by the Portsmouth striker Paul Hall over alleged racist remarks made to him by Manchester City's Eddie McCordrick. Hall claims McCordrick abused him during Wednesday's 1-1 draw at Maine Road and has reported the Republic of Ireland international to the police, but not, so far, to the FA.

## In Monday's 20-page sports section



"I felt that it was totally wrong that Matthew Le Tissier took the brunt for the [England] performance. Matt's been there before and is big enough and strong enough to take it but, as far as I'm concerned, we should all have taken some stick." Alan Shearer talks to Ian Stafford in the Monday interview.

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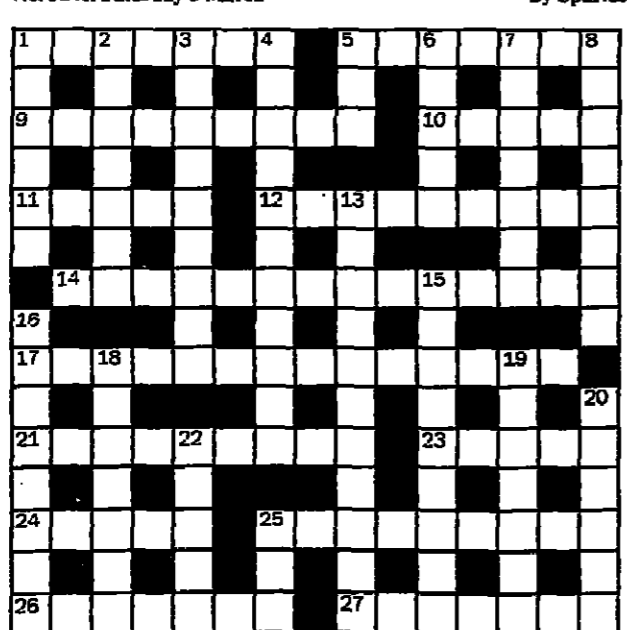
## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3241, Saturday 8 March

By Spurius

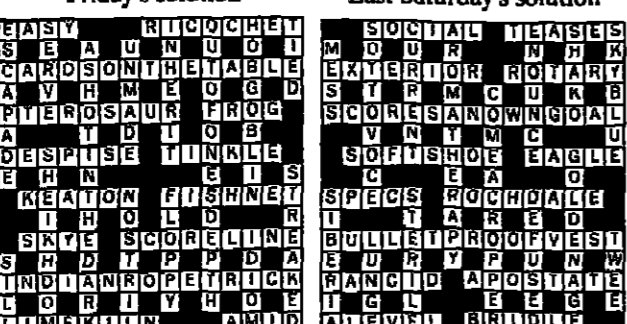
ACROSS

DOWN



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



- 1 R Cruise, rugged hunting type (7)
- 5 Foreign articles about British colony, quite readable (7)
- 9 Shrub produced by park-keeper we hear (9)
- 10 Advance proclamation made by girl in Bahamas (5)
- 11 Country code largely palcing restriction on artist (5)
- 12 Type of truck seen on a railway somewhere in Ireland (9)
- 14 They're mainly involved in carrying receptacles (9, 5)
- 17 Books in and books out regularly at this establishment (7,7)
- 21 Posters idly about the City, thought with high security classification (3, 6)
- 23 Greek character exercises in the shade (5)
- 24 Delay for Australian entering Peru (5)
- 25 Very gripping movie? (9)
- 26 Thin student featured in poster? (7)
- 27 Marines' training session in college (7)

- 1 Man about to join firm has to be consistent (6)
- 2 Drug, one wrongly prescribed, making us suffer (7)
- 3 Person responsible for opera unhappy with Trial cast? (9)
- 4 Tory Eurosceptic for example is quite a moaning minnie (5-6)
- 5 Local body found in field? (5)
- 6 Part of building specified by clerk, we're told? (5)
- 7 New form of Belgian language (7)
- 8 Lamb, for instance - one's often dipped in pen (8)
- 13 Young branch of medical science? (11)
- 15 Very good hooker's bowled over by tactical play (9)
- 16 Primitive mammal must be a tailless variety - positive about that (8)
- 18 He's been made First Sea Lord, by Jovel (7)
- 19 Change in Euro note - another meeting required (7)
- 20 American prophet going around in bowler (6)
- 22 Contribution from gentlemen didn't improve things (5)
- 25 Dog police officers reared (3)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hand-drawn copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: Gordon Wilson, Edinburgh; Kevin McNeill, Southampton; N. Maggs, Little Princes; Rosemarie Harrison, London E17; Peter & Kim Burns, Gants Hill.

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# IMAGE OF THE WEEK

As our gardening expert Anna Pavord puts it: 'I wouldn't go as far as to say spring has arrived ... but it sure as hell feels as if it isn't winter any more.' Certainly these crocuses on a hillside near Tredegar, Wales, testifies to that spring feeling. Photograph by Andrew Burman, using a Canon EOS 10, 35mm lens, 4,000th second at f5.6. To order a print of this picture phone 0171-293 2534



# the long weekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 8 MARCH 1997

**W**e are part of a world system, the working of which is no longer compatible with either democracy or peace. If we want them, we must change the world system. We must change it swiftly, for if we wait, the initiative will be in the hands of those to whom neither democracy nor peace is an ideal charged with meaning.

The world system that is destroying hope in the world is capitalism. That it means the destruction of democracy, Italy and Germany are there to show. That it means war, Manchuria and Abyssinia and Spain are there to bear their tragic witness.

It is capitalism that has caused world depression. It is capitalism that has created the distressed areas. It is capitalism that is piling up vast armaments now for the war whose shadow hestrides our lives. It is capitalism that divides our people into the two nations of rich and poor. Either we must defeat capitalism or we shall be defeated by it.

The defeat of capitalism depends upon the unity of the working class. If its forces are divided, as in Italy and Germany, it is defeated in detail. A united working class can take the offensive. It has the massed power out of which courage and hope are born. It is able to take the initiative from its opponents' hands. It is able to give direction to its effort. A united working class can go forward to a defined goal. It can move on central positions. It has none of the doubts which, through hesitation and compromise, lead straight to defeat.

The Labour movement of this country has

## WORDS OF THE WEEK



The great and good of New Labour and the old Left paid £50 a head to attend a party at a fashionable London hotel to celebrate 60 years of the Labour newspaper 'Tribune'. This is the statement of intent by first editor, William Mellor, published in 1937

sought again and again, since 1919, to find terms of compromise with its opponents, and thus accepted the "inevitability of gradualness". It has insisted that there are no lessons for ourselves in the experience of continental peoples. It has declared that "it can't happen here". It has tried to purchase peace by agreement. It has even tried the policy of partial surrender.

Once at every point it has given up the initiative, capitalism has ruthlessly beaten down its standard of life in the interest of private profit. We do not blame capitalism for this: it is the inherent logic of its system.

But we must draw from our experience the lesson that, without the initiative in our hands, we shall be beaten as the Italian and German working classes have been beaten. And there can be no working-class initiative without working-class unity.

A so-called National Government has taken advantage of these divisions to move in the direction of fascism. As the crisis deepens, it will take further advantage of them.

As it has been in domestic policies, so it has been also in the international field. The League of Nations is dead, killed by the National Government. They are now doing a cynical deal with the Fascist conquerors of Abyssinia. Their pol-

icy of non-intervention has made of Spain a shambles in which the Spanish working class are the victims ...

All is built upon the same iron necessity - capitalism must find markets in which profit can be made. And since national states are the pawns in the capitalist game, their citizens must be killed, on the battlefield and in air raids, that the owners of the instruments of production may make the profit.

It is this which has made the Labour movement socialist. It is this that has led it to insist that we can no longer patch up the capitalist system. We know now that there need be no want, no poverty, no means test, no devastated areas. They exist because capitalism exists: they are the price we pay for its continuance.

And the longer it continues, the more intense it will become. Its contradictions now can be resolved only by abandoning all the gains the working class has made this 100 years. They have gone in Italy and Germany. They are threatened in Spain. In France they have been checked only by the union of working-class forces.

Here, they are threatened too. British capitalism is on the dole. It sucks the life blood of the state for its maintenance.

If we will the end of capitalism, we must will

the means to socialism. The first step to that end is a united working-class movement, active in challenge and attack. Fighting for immediate objectives, fighting against reaction and Fascism. It must mobilise the workers now for day-to-day struggle against the means test, for higher wages, for the 40-hour week, for work in the most distressed areas.

It must work to bring into power a working-class government pledged to put into operation a workers' programme, swiftly, decisively, drastically.

That means immediate nationalisation of the banks. It means nationalisation of coal and power, land and the means of transport. It means the immediate nationalisation of the arms industry. It means the abolition of the means test. It means a great housing programme. It means the withdrawal of the aged from industry with pensions, adequate to a decent life at 60. It means raising the school leaving age to 16 with full maintenance allowances. It means a drastic upward revision of the scales of the unemployed until, by socialist planning, they are reabsorbed into work.

On the international front, it means real collective security. We must give the republican government of Spain its legal right to arms. We must tell the Fascist powers that the limit of their aggression has been reached.

We must join with France and the Soviet Union to resist their piecemeal threat to the remaining democracies of the world. As they are prepared to disarm. But as they threaten peace, so we shall defend it. For a workers' government, either we go forward now to socialism or there will be widespread retrogression to that Fascist barbarism into which the larger part of Europe has been plunged. For the Hitlers and Mussolinis cannot afford to wait: their grim gamble demands conquest or disaster.

Our Baldwins and Edens cannot shuffle and evade the issues they pose. The Labour movement must choose. It has now come to the turning-point of its history.

## INSIDE

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... and finds an actor passionate about Shakespeare **page 3**

### The extravagant world of WB Yeats

Tom between the smell of horses and the odour of sanctity **page 6**

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The union card of 'Tribune' writer Eric Blair - aka George Orwell

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Why do more people go back to Cyprus than anywhere else in the Med?

NOBODY EVER GOES JUST ONCE

# Forget 42; the answer is 103

William Hartston unravels the true significance of six characters in search of a number

The most significant moment in next Monday's television programme *For the Love of... Numbers* comes close to the end, when Don Stallybrass, an astrologer and poet, is asked when he first became fascinated by the number 42. "It was 18 May 1993," he replies with unexpected precision, "when I saw this article by William Hartston in *The Independent*."

Well, I'm terribly sorry to have to admit it, but it's time to come clean. The answer to Life, the Universe and Everything is not 42 after all. It's 103 and I can prove it. But first, the programme.

*For the Love of... Numbers* (Channel 4, midnight, Monday 10 March) begins with six characters who have found the secret of the mystery of life. All you have to do, it seems, is pick a number – almost any number will do – and wait for it to turn up on a passing bus, newspaper or hotel room. If you pick a small number, you'll soon be deluged with coincidences. If you choose a large number, you get fewer hits, but the feeling of joy when your number occurs is immeasurably greater.

The superstitious sextet begin by introducing themselves and telling us their numbers. There is Gerald Suster, whose favourite number is 93 (though he later admits that his own number is in fact 419) which was a number of great significance in the life of the occultist Aleister Crowley, a biographical subject of Mr Suster. He's very impressed that we're 93 million miles from the sun, but must be disappointed by kilometres.

Then there's Nigel Bourne, a paganist and musician, and Chris Outteridge, a nasal youth with a skippy beard, both of whom share the number 23. Graham Roos has a busier life, being fond of two, seven and 11, while Meg Pringle Adamson's number is five, "the number of freedom and expansion" – and she should know, because she writes personality reports on people based on numerological aspects of their names and dates of birth.

Don "42" Stallybrass was initially impressed when he read in this paper of the apparently coincidental occurrences of the number in various ancient religions and in the works of Lewis Carroll, all long before Douglas Adams discovered 42. Mr Stallybrass is now very fond of all multiples of his chosen number, especially 588. (You'll find a Stallybrass on page 588 of the Brighton phone directory, incidentally, and the joy he felt at being allocated room 588 in a Vienna hotel cannot be described.)

Anyway, with Jon Ronson acting the part of a hyper-glib, totally laid-back presenter, these six participants engage in energetic and portentous chat about their numbers, saying things such as: "The universe is predicated upon number", and "23 always seems to come up in my experience when there's a random factor disrupting order" (23, incidentally, crops up a good deal in various episodes of *The Simpsons*), or "Nine, of course, is the moon number; the number of change."

"Of course" is one of those phrases that they all use in a rather different way from the rest of us. In the language of numerology, "of course" appears to mean "what I am about to say is totally unsustainable by any known form of logic". Another such word is "interesting" which is used in the sense of "mind-bogglingly dull".



Aleister Crowley, 'The Great Beast', had mystic connections with the number 93

Lewis Carroll may have been the first to appreciate the wonders of 42

Often, the conversation gives the impression of being conducted by six blinkered number-fetishists, each running in his or her own lane oblivious of all numbers other than their own. Except for the two 23s who occasionally make contact with each other, and Mr two-seven-11 who is vying about all over the track. The seventh participant, the presenter, really should have been a little more critical, if only to give the others something to gang up against. As it is, they spend too much time nodding conspiratorially at each other and snuggly sharing the delights of mystic enlightenment.

Seven, of course, is a very spiritual number. A recent (unpublished) communication to our letters page contained the top half torn from our front page of Tuesday, 25 February, annotated with

arithmetical calculations. The number of that edition of the paper was 3,229:  $3+2+2+9=16$  and  $1+6=7$ . Now, seven is also the number of letters in "Tuesday" and "Weather" both of which occurred just below the masthead. Just below that, drawing attention to the "Analysis" feature inside, were the words, "Who cares if the sky is falling", which, if you add together the letters in each of its words, gives  $3+5+2+3+3+2+7=25$  and  $2+5=7$  again. The headline "The King's Road irregulars versus the jungle rebels" contains 43 letters ( $4+3=7$ ) and the sub-heading "Security firm hired to end guerrilla war" has 34 letters ( $3+4=7$ ). Even Colin Wheeler's cartoon (note the seven letters in "Wheeler", incidentally) had a 34-letter speech bubble. And it was, after all, 25 February ( $2+5=7$ ).

We do not know precisely why the

letters editor chose not to publish this chilling information. It may have been that it arrived anonymously – just an annotated torn sheet of newspaper in an envelope – or it may have been on the very reasonable grounds that the year is 1997 and  $1+9+9+7=26$  and  $2+6=8$ . Had it happened last year, we'd have been delighted, but since the first of January we've been collecting only eights. Anyway, it's good to know that there are people out there adding up the numbers of letters in all the words on our front page in search of enlightenment.

Neither seven nor eight, however, is the real answer. And neither is 42. The true answer came to me in a flash while watching a preview tape of next Monday's programme. Take the numbers given by each of the six participants when introducing themselves at the beginning and add them all together, and you get  $93+5+2+7+11+42+23+23$  which gives a total of 206. Now 206 equals two times 103. Remember that.

Now take the word "bullshit" and add together the positions in the alphabet of its letters:  $2+21+12+12+19+8+9+20$ . What's the answer? Why, it's 103 again. And finally, what is the date on which this highly significant programme is to be broadcast? The 10th of March. That's the 10th day of the third month. 103 again. Uncanny.

Of course, diehard fortytwists will doubtless point out that if you add the one and the three of 103 you get four, and if you subtract the one from the three you get two, which brings us back to 42. Yet there can be little doubt which of 103 and 42 has the primary role in this calculation, and which emerges as a mere corollary of numerological truth.

In view of our evident culpability in promoting the cult of fortytwism on various occasions over the past few years, and with particular apologies to Mr Stallybrass, we feel that the least we can do is to offer our limited services to help in the promotion of the new religion of 103ism.

If any potential converts have details of remarkable sightings of the number 103 or its multiples, we shall be pleased to hear from them. Contributions (no prizes in this world; this is a divine calling) to: The Games Page, *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Mark the envelope "103" in a manner that will not confuse the postman. We shall collate replies and report back at a later date.

Finally, and as a cautionary tale, we end with a little numerological game played on viewers by Jon Ronson at the end of Monday's programme:

Think of a whole number between one and nine. Multiply it by nine. If your answer has two digits, add them together. Subtract five from your answer. Now work out which letter occupies the position in the alphabet given by your answer. Think of a country beginning with that letter. Take the second letter of the name of that country. Now think of an animal beginning with that letter. Imagine the colour of that animal.

Are you now thinking of a grey elephant from Denmark? No? Well, neither did I. In fact I ended up with a brownish jerboa from Djibouti. Which just goes to show that this numerological nonsense doesn't work for everyone.

## Games people play

Pandora Melly learns the indirect joy of chess

Brian Sewell, art critic of the *London Evening Standard*

I haven't played rugby since I was 26 or 27, and I gave up tennis two years ago when I had my first heart attack. I feel unsure about returning to it, and I stopped skiing for the same reason. Those were my three physical games, and I feel that an important part of my life has come to an end.

Now, board games: chess is something I might still play if I could find a partner who was bad enough. I find that chess is very useful when travelling alone in Turkey. If you are stuck at a bus station, or in a dingy little village with no bus at all, with hours to kill before bed, take yourself to the nearest tea-house. Order a glass of tea, and another of Raki – the fearsome Turkish equivalent of Ouzo, and set up a chess problem. Within seconds, Turks will appear. They won't play chess with you, but it starts a conversation.

I did this once and someone asked: "Can I practise my English

with you?" His first question was: "How many princesses have you slept with?" So now you see the point of chess. After that, of course, there follows an orgy of tea-drinking and tric-trac playing, during which one learns a little Turkish and teaches a little English, and so chess has served its purpose.

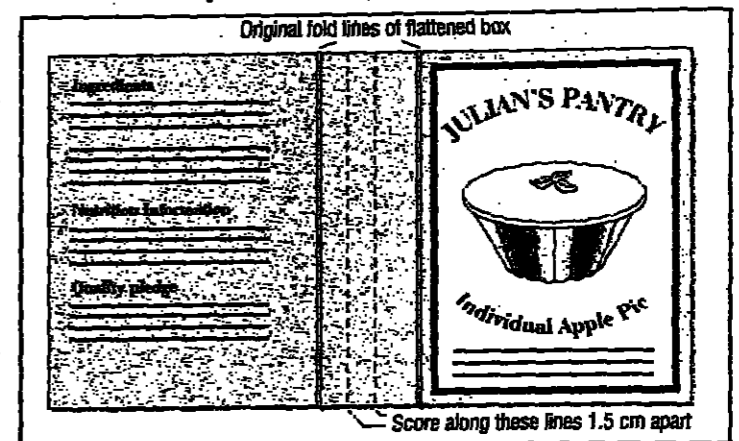
As for card games, at these I'm hopeless. And should I ever be compelled to make up a fourth at anything – and heaven forbid that it should be bridge – I have to have the rules explained at every response. I'm really such a nuisance to the other players that they soon give up and turn to drink.

Fortnum & Mason's Turkish Delight is imported directly from Turkey in a traditional wooden box containing rose, lemon, pistachio, almond, honey and apricot flavours. £9.50 for 454g (orders, 0171-463-8666).

Tric-trac is a variation of backgammon using pawns as well as pieces.

## Don't junk it ... use it

Personalised personal organisers from cereal packs



Forget Filofax: here's a way to make a child's (or eccentric adult's) personal notebook from discarded packets.

First pick a cardboard container with a design and product that you feel reflect your personality. Personally, I opt for the JetFill Premium Cartridge Refill pack, but you may prefer corn flakes or apple pie. Open the pack out flat as shown in the diagram above, with the front and back of the original carton connected by what was a side edge. That side edge will form both the spine of your organiser and the holder for its pages. Cut the cardboard to whatever size you require.

Now score two lines down the middle section as shown. These will be

folded, as in the second diagram, to produce the ridge which will be used to secure the pages.

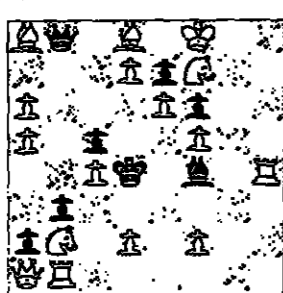
You may choose to conceal the package design in the interior of the organiser, as shown, or display it proudly on the outside. Fold along the scored lines, stick the ridge shut with glue or

double-sided tape, punch two holes in it and that's all there is to it. When you come to load it with paper, you can use a plastic paper-securing device, available from all esoteric stationers, but I find that a shoelace does the trick just as well and is available from any good shoe.

Bawn O'Beirne-Ranelagh

The games page is edited by William Hartston

## Chess William Hartston



Joseph Ney Babson (1852-1924) bequeathed to the world of chess problems a challenge – known as the Babson Task – that was to keep them occupied for more than 50 years after his death. The task was to compose a problem in which White and Black both have a pawn on the seventh rank, and in reply to four variations in which the black pawn promotes to queen, rook, bishop and knight. White must promote to the same piece in each case to force mate.

Babson had done it in a non-standard problem – a self-mate where White had to force Black to give mate – but composers despaired over attempts to do it in the standard. White to play and mate in *n* format.

For fifty years the Babson task was thought impossible, but in 1983 the Russian Leonid Jarosh cracked it. The diagram shows his extraordinary composition. It is White to play and mate in four.

The first move is 1.a7! setting up the mechanism. After 1...axb1(Q) White plays 2.axb8(Q)! Qxb2 (giving the king an escape square on d5) 3.Qxb3! Qxa1 4.Rxf4 mate.

After 1...axb1(R), 2.axb8(Q)! Rxb2 3.Qxb3 is stalemate; but White plays 2.axb8(R)! Rxb2 3.Rxb5 Kxc4 4.Qa4 mate.

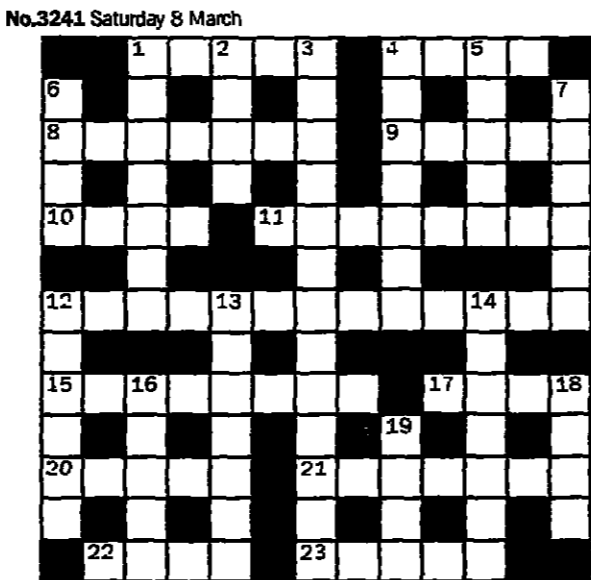
Still more tricky is 1...axb1(B), when Black introduces the idea of Be4 into the defence. The only way to defeat it is 2.axb8(B)! Be4 3.Bxf4! Bxa8 4.Be5 (or Be3) mate.

The last thematic variation is 1...axb1(N) 2.axb8(N)! Nxd2 3.Qc1 Ne4 (otherwise 4.Rxf4 will be mate) 4.Nc6 mate.

Finally, and somewhat messily, we have to fill in the details of the mates if Black does not promote his pawn at the first move: 1...Qxd8+ 2.Kg7! Qc7 3.d8=Q+ Qxd8 4.Rxf4; or 1...Qe5 2.Bxe7 Qd6 3.Nxd6 axb1(Q) 4.Bxf6 mate; or 1...Qxa8 2.Rxf4+ Qe4 3.a8=Q Qxf4 4.Qd5 mate; or 1...Qd6 2.Re1 Qe5 (to stop Re4 mate) 3.Nxa5 fxe3 4.Re4 mate.

The magnitude of this achievement (and the fact that Yarosh went on to publish a slightly simpler version soon after) must make this a candidate for the Greatest Problem of All Time award.

## concise crossword



- ACROSS**
- Woodland god (5)
  - Number of Muses (4)
  - Radio-active element (7)
  - Falter (5)
  - Conceal (4)
  - Ambled (8)
  - OAP (6,7)
  - Neighbouring (8)
  - Young animal (4)
  - Alcoholic drink (5)
  - Food parcels? (7)
  - Nurse (4)
  - Decoys (5)
- DOWN**
- Substitute (5-2)
  - Catch on (4)
  - Means of changing channels (6,7)
  - Gwent town (7)
  - Work of fiction (5)
  - A great deal (4)
  - English poet (6)
  - Perish from hunger (6)
  - Stand of fruit trees (7)
  - Ardent (7)
  - Estimate (5)
  - Seethe (4)
  - Six balls (4)

**Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:**

ACROSS: 1 Lighters, 5 Hair (Light as air), 9 Place, 10 Ukraine, 11 Triumphant, 14 Chrysanthemum, 16 Oppression, 20 Regalia, 21 Wheat, 22 Meek, 23 Hydrated. DOWN: 1 Lipstick, 2 Glaciers, 3 Therm, 4 Rough-and-ready, 6 Exit, 7 Reef, 8 Drench, 12 Imminent, 13 Emanated, 15 Supply, 17 Sewer, 18 Tram, 19 Ogile.

## Bridge Alan Hiron

Game all; dealer South

North	South
♠ 8 3 2	♠ K 5
♥ K 5	♥ A 10 7 6 5 3
♦ A 5	♦ A 5
West	East
♠ J	♠ K 5 4
♥ J 9 8 7 4 2	♥ 10
♦ K J 9 8	♦ Q 4
♣ J 10	♣ Q 9 8 7 6 4 2
South	North
♠ A Q 10 9 7 6	♠ A Q 6 3
♥ A Q 6 3	♥ 2
♦ 2	♦ K 3
♣ K 3	

Well pleased with the result of his safety play in his spade slam on this deal, South lost his concentration and missed a not too difficult way of improving his chances. It happens to us all ...

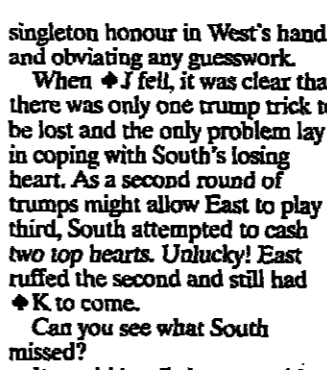
South opened 1♠ and rebid 2♣ over his partner's response of 2♣.

North gave jump preference with a limit bid of 3♠ and Blackwood led to the small slam. West led CJ against Six Spades and declarer won in hand. He followed with the standard play of ♠A, guarding against a

singleton honour in West's hand and obviating any guesswork. When ♠J fell, it was clear that there was only one trump trick to be lost and the only problem lay in coping with South's losing heart. As a second round of trumps might allow East to play a third, South attempted to cash two top hearts. Unlucky! East ruffed the second and still had ♠K to come.

Can you see what South missed? It would hardly have cost him to have cashed ♠A at trick three and follow by ruffing a diamond in hand. When the missing diamonds prove to be no worse than 4-2, declarer can afford to lead ♠Q from hand. Now, if East holds off, it is perfectly safe to cash the two top hearts for all that East can come to is a trick with his king of trumps. So, suppose that East takes his king and leads a third trump. Declarer can win with dummy's eight, ruff another diamond in hand, and still has ♥K and ♠A on the table as entries to establish and enjoy a long diamond for a discard of the losing heart.

## Backgammon Chris Bray



We return to the game where we left off last week. White on roll – should he double? Should Black take or drop?

Edward O Thorpe is famous in the world of backgammon for his theories, published in *Beat the Dealer*. What is less well known is that he also studied backgammon, and developed a formula for accurately evaluating racing positions which takes into account distributional features as well as the pip count.

Calculate the leader's (L) adjusted pip count as follows: (1) Calculate the normal pip count. (2) Add two for each remaining man. (3) Add one for each man on the 1-point. (4) Subtract one for each point in the home board with at least one man on it. (5) Add 10 per cent to the total if it is less than 30.

Do the same for the trailer (T) but omit step (5). If T > L-2 the leader should double. If T > L-1 the leader should redouble. If T > L+2 the trailer should pass.

In the problem above, White's count is 38.5 (21+16+2-4+3.5). Black's count is 38 (29+12+0-3). Thus, according to Thorpe's formula, White should double and Black should take. Checking against the Sconyer's CD of bear-off positions shows this to be the correct answer.

Thorpe's formula is remarkably accurate for this type of position, and it fails only when it comes up against really strange distributions.

Use of Thorpe's formula will strengthen your doubling decisions in races and bear-offs. In the chouette from which this position was taken White, the box, redoubled to 4. Two of my team-mates passed, the other two of us took and we were rewarded when we threw a timely set of double fives on the last roll.

# Old Vic's master of disguise

When Michael Pennington was just 11, he was taken to the Old Vic theatre in London – “dragged there”, as he recalls, “because I knew it was going to be boring” – plunked in a seat and told to watch *Macbeth*, as impersonated by Paul Rogers. The effect was amazing. Countless early Bardophiles have said, as he now says, “It changed my life”, but in Pennington's case it's literally true. It was like Ruth Lawrence being given her first sum, Ryan Giggs encountering his first spherical object, Mozart hearing B flat major in his cot. Pennington went to the next production (John Neville in *Richard II*) and the next... “They were doing all the Shakespeares here in 1954, so by the time I was 14 or 15, I'd seen the lot. It thrilled me. But it was completely unbrainy. It was sexy.”

From that day, Pennington has devoted the major part of his life to the works of the Avon swan. If his name and face are not as well known as his classical peers (Ian McKellen, say, or Alan Howard), it's because he has remained so grimly true to the stage. His career suggests a man in the grip of an obsession, drenched and drowned in Shakespeareana. He played Hamlet in a student production when at Cambridge in 1964, and went directly from university to Stratford, has played every Shakespearean male lead except Romeo, co-founded the English Shakespeare Company in 1986 with Michael Bogdanov, the well-known critic-abuser, and toured their epic conflation of the history plays all over the known world under the title *The Wars of the Roses*. He's written a book about the ESC, and a notably convincing and sensitive study called *Hamlet: A User's Guide*. Without actually changing his name to Will, and acquiring an Elizabethan ruff and a pointy beard, it's hard to see how Mr Pennington can more forcefully express his interest in the finest poet and dramatist.

He's also, however, been at pains to reinterpret the Bard for new generations and complexions of theatre audience – the young, the working-class, the criminal, the Third World, the disadvantaged... “The best *Twelfth Night* I ever saw,” he explains, “was in a school production at Westminster, because the innocence of the performing was wonderful. And though it's heresy for an actor to say this, the ESC did a production of *The Tempest* in Maidstone Prison, with two professional actors and a cast

of lifers, which is easily the best *Tempest* I've ever seen. It's a play, of course, that's centrally concerned with freedom and imprisonment. Sometimes the crudeness or amateurishness of the playing affects me more than any more sophisticated treatment can. Just as the Shakespeare canon I saw in the mid-Fifties, though it was probably crudely done, and we might curl our lip at it now, it probably comes closer to the blood and thunder of what Shakespeare really is...”

Hmmm. Does Mr Pennington come across as a little too evangelical, as the kindly vicar

**“I think tongues are cheating when it comes to stage kissing. The audience can't see it... Playing love scenes is daft anyway!”**

surveying the amateur-dramatics society and muttering “Ah, bless them...”? That wouldn't be right. In the flesh, he seems without affectation, an unusually clever, thoughtful and articulate chap, none of which adjectives can be generally applied across the acting profession. His days as a dashing romantic lead (fair-to-blond curls swept back from his handsome face and mile-high forehead) have crept past, leaving him, at 53, looking a bit lean and shrunken. His sharp eyes hooded by Garfield lids. His drily musical, Alec McCowen-ish voice is accompanied by a lot of graceful, actorish hand gestures, but nothing that would prompt a rebuke (“And do not say the air thus...” from Polonius. He is the very model of a professional actor, dependable and competent but perhaps less disposed towards passionate risks than heretofore. And thus he seems the right man to play Henry Trebell, MP, the lead role in Harvey Granville Barker's 1926 play *Waste*, which kicks off the Peter Hall rep company's new season at the Old Vic next week.

He has, of course, played dozens of non-Bard roles in his career (Chekhov is a special-

ity). But committing himself to Sir Peter's rep company for a long season – he will also be appearing as Trigorin in *The Seagull* and Sir John Brute in Vanbrugh's *The Provok'd Wife* – is a statement of intent for Pennington. It means he's back in town, disdaining television and movies and touring and even Shakespeare, committing himself to the open stage and expanding his range of roles. “I do count myself lucky to have done all that Shakespeare,” he says, “but I've always been a character actor by instinct, a dissembler rather than a self-promoter. When I first went to Stratford, I was always saying, ‘I don't want to play the student or the lover, can I play the guy's father or the tractor hand or something?’” He is proudest of having hoofed and sung as Archie Rice, the “saloon-bar Priapus” in Osborne's *The Entertainer* at the Hampstead Theatre. And he was pleased with the huge risk of *Strider: the Story of a Horse*, at the National, in which he played the eponymous equine, getting inside the role by spending two gruelling hours a day learning prancing and dressage at the barre.

And now there's *Waste*, a drama with reassuringly Shakespearean ambitions. It's politics vs idealism, in which Henry Trebell, an independent MP and intellectual superman, is wooed into a new Labour government and promised a seat in Cabinet on the understanding that he will steer through Parliament a bill for the disestablishment of the Church of England. But the repercussions of an affair with a loose-cannon married Catholic woman start to wreck everything, even when the Prime Minister tries to smooth it all over. It's a very wordy, brittle and Shavian piece of work, in which everyone talks political shop, everyone schemes in tuxedos and very long sentences, and the air is thick with moral trimming.

“Barker is as good as Shaw, I think,” says Pennington, “line by line and scene by scene. He hasn't any of that vanity and show-off quality that Shaw has. And I think I understand why he's not as big as Shaw: it's because his writing is so... *chaste*. His political arguments are very thorough. He doesn't stop halfway through with a joke, as Shaw would. He doesn't simplify. He asks that you listen.” He gave a small sigh, “and he's provided the least commercial *life* of the century. Shaw would have called it ‘A Statesman and a Scandal’ or ‘Too Pretty to be Good’, or something...”

The role of Henry – a smarter 1926 Cecil Parkinson



## John Walsh meets... Michael Pennington

– is hard to get in focus: he's a man who is, by turns, astute, unworldly, passionate, reclusive, a cold fish, a ladies' man, a political visionary, a political pragmatist... Pennington rises to the challenge by playing him with a near-permanent crinkly-eyed grin which only cracks when someone yells in his face. I said I thought he was miscast. Did he have a clear sense of Henry's character?

“I'm getting there. It's not as simple as it looks. The thing is, Barker breaks one of the rules of drama, which is that a character should be just as he's described by everyone else. But before he comes on, they all say, he's such a solitary, he hates women – and first thing you see of the guy is when he's literally charming the knickers off a society girl.”

The “girl” is Felicity Kendal, all flapper threads and coquettish wail, whom the text requires Mr Pennington to

kiss several times with impetuous, let-me-devour-you enthusiasm. How had he come to terms with snogging the nation's sweetheart, every night? “I must be the luckiest man in Britain,” he gallantly replied. Did they have a bilateral no-tongues agreement? “I think tongues are cheating when it comes to stage kissing,” said Pennington seriously, “because the audience can't see it... But playing love scenes is daft anyway. I've got away with it, all these years – I've never had to take my kit off. And now I'm too old for anyone to want me to. But for girls, well – you simply won't get through your career without having to do it, if you're halfway pretty...”

Back to the play. What is the “waste” the title refers to? Is it personal or political? “It's a play about a man who's incapable of joining in. He's 51, he has beliefs and convictions but

he's too proud to join in. He's never married, never had a family. Then two things happen: he gets fired up over a political issue and joins a government; and suddenly the idea of parenthood is offered to him. Then both things are abruptly taken away and the loss – the two wastes – are enough to destroy him.”

Pennington, so adept at teasing out motivation and latent passion in Shakespeare, is frustrated by Granville Barker's impermeable surface. “If it was Ibsen, there'd come a point where a great fissure would open in the text and all this emotional lava would come out. But Barker never allows you that. I asked Peter [Hall] at the beginning: ‘How do I show what he's really feeling?’ You look for the place where it falls apart and you can't find it.”

Had he met many politicians? “I sat beside Virginia

Bottomley once,” he said with evident distaste. “She came to see a play I was in, called *Taking Sides* and we went to the Ivy [restaurant] afterwards. At the end she said, ‘What do you want me to do, now I'm at Heritage?’ I remember pitching in with some things I feel strongly about, like the fact that students can't raise grants to train for the theatre any more, and have to write begging letters to people like me. All she would say was, ‘Ah, but I believe drama schools are charging too much anyway’ which rather misses the point. What struck me was, she spent most of the time in a devotional posture, with her hands on the table before her. It was only when midnight struck that I realised she'd been looking at her wristwatch all evening. And at midnight on the nail, she left.”

Was there a little unconfessed anger here? There was. It was about the L-word. “It was when I heard her talking about this fairly harmless proposal of Blair's, to spend some Lottery money for some form of grant for actors, and she describes it as a ‘Luvvies' Charter.’ Pennington practically smouldered in front of me, like Coriolanus, or Henry Trebell finding a cause to fight against. ‘It's truly hair-raising that she can express herself in that way and not care how unpopular she's going to be

among the constituency she's supposed to be looking after.”

Pennington's combative streak has surfaced at several points in his career – when globetrotting with a theatrical troupe, having blazing rows about the provision of cooked breakfasts, and when resigning from the English Shakespeare Company five years ago, after suffering the death of a thousand cuts at the hands of the Arts Council (“I threw my resignation on the table in the middle of a board meeting, stormed out and rang *The Independent*...”). Today, he's past all the actor-manager histrionics, the travelling Shakespeare Show that was the *Wars of the Roses*. He lives in Highgate and is extremely cagey about his private life. “I'm a single, heterosexual bachelor” is all he'll volunteer to the press. Noting his strong paternal streak, I asked if he had children and yes, “I've a son of 30 called Mark, a very good illustrative photographer. I'm going to be a grandfather in April. Mark is living in my house in the country in Oxfordshire, so I'm dreaming of lots of grandchildren running about under the apple trees...” How sweet to encounter such a fond prospect of retirement. But, as parts go, it's a bit on the quiet side for such a connoisseur of passion, such a cautious observer of wasted lives.

## ‘The Danny Baker who returned was different to the one who left’

Matt Tench  
sports notebook

In an Indian restaurant last summer, a short walk from Wembley, England football fans were joyously celebrating their side's trouncing of the Netherlands in Euro 96. As the night wore on, the numbers thinned a little, but the place was still two-thirds full when Chris Evans and Danny Baker walked in.

The pair were greeted with a mixture of boisterous camaraderie and faint embarrassment, but the contrast in their reactions was remarkable. Evans, undoubtedly the bigger star, smiled a little sheepishly and made his way to a vacant table, a beautiful woman on his arm.

Baker, though, was not going to let the moment pass. “Do you know what this is?” he said, addressing the throng as he reached down and produced a white garment. “This is Gazza's shirt.”

As the cheers died down, Baker flourished a second item. “And these,” he declared, “are his socks!” Danny Baker has never needed much encouragement to play to the

gallery, but as of this weekend, his opportunities to do so have been severely curtailed. On Wednesday, he was sacked by the BBC from his evening football phone-in show, a move which prompted him to resign from the Saturday lunch-time phone-in he co-hosts with Danny Kelly. Richard Littlejohn, who presumably went to the same school of tact and diplomacy as Baker, takes over the Saturday show.

Both Baker's programmes were on Radio Five Live, a station for which he has nurtured a burgeoning contempt. For now, Baker's association with the Beeb is limited to his Sunday morning show on GLR (with tomorrow's show now required listening for news editors across the capital).

The catalyst for the current brouhaha was Baker's performance 10 days ago in the programme

which immediately followed the controversial FA Cup tie in which Chelsea beat Leicester City thanks to a highly debatable penalty. Baker, never slow to harangue officialdom, was incandescent, and devoted the bulk of his show to a series of vitriolic attacks on Mike Reed, the man who awarded the penalty.

“There is a maggot at the heart of the golden core of football, and it is referees,” he thundered. Reed, he said, should be the sacrificial lamb. “We're going to make you responsible for all the bad decisions until there is a change.” His *coup de grace* was to suggest that Leicester fans should picket Reed's home in Birmingham.

When, towards the end of the show, a caller suggested he was being unfair to referees, Baker responded: “Lose him, lose him, lose him. I don't want to hear the other side. I am not interested in some kind of balanced argument.”

Not for the first time, Baker's outbursts alarmed the BBC hierarchy and, after a week's delibera-

tions, his show was axed. For many football fans, it was a sad, if inevitable, moment. Five years ago, Baker was the darling of supporters across the country with his brilliant hosting of the ground-breaking 6-0-6, Britain's first national football phone-in.

It gave them a national platform for the first time and they came across as opinionated, passionate, and humorous; sometimes they were irrational, but rarely offensive. It played a significant part in the softening of the national image of football fans in the early Nineties.

Baker was the ideal compere. A Millwall fan, he delighted in the programme's partiality, and spiced up the discussion with brief, stream-of-consciousness diatribes that were both mischievous and articulate.

As so often with radio stars, Baker was soon wooed to television, but his career on the box, which included a chat show, games show and Daz commercials, proved an almost unmitigated disaster, and in the past couple of years,

many were asking when Baker would return to 6-0-6.

His long-term replacement was David Mellor, Tory MP and Chelsea fan, whose patronising style was in marked contrast to Baker's genuine matinee. (Mellor can sound like a lord of the manor who has invited the estate workers to the house for their annual visit and is prepared, just this once, to talk about their interests.)

Last autumn, Baker did return to the football phone-in – not to the Saturday evening slot, which Mellor kept and to which Baker made cutting reference in his first show, but to a new programme after Wednesday night games.

The Baker who returned was very different to the one who left. The diatribes were longer and more extreme, and those callers daring enough to disagree received short, often abusive, shrift. To many, he had become a sporting “shock jock”, though he angrily denied the description on his last show.

Others detect the influence of his close friend Evans, another



who is not known to worry about giving offence. In recent weeks, Baker has encouraged Spurs fans to throw their programmes on the pitch (an illegal act), described the chairman of one club as “bent” and wished terminal illness on the board of another. Concern within the game reached such a pitch that the League Managers' Association recently considered withdrawing good will unless both Baker's and Mellor's shows were taken off the air.

Baker, who is 39, has reacted to

his dismissal with characteristic good humour, and there are already suggestions that Talk Radio are interested.

Even if they are not, Baker, who writes much of Evans' *TFI Friday*, remains much in demand as a scriptwriter. His opportunities to air his views may be much reduced, but the last thing he would want from the events of the past few days is sympathy. Those close to him suggest he has enjoyed the whole episode hugely.

David Lister is on holiday

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# arts & books

## How the udder half lives

Forget knitting by the fireside: textiles are tackling big issues. By John Windsor

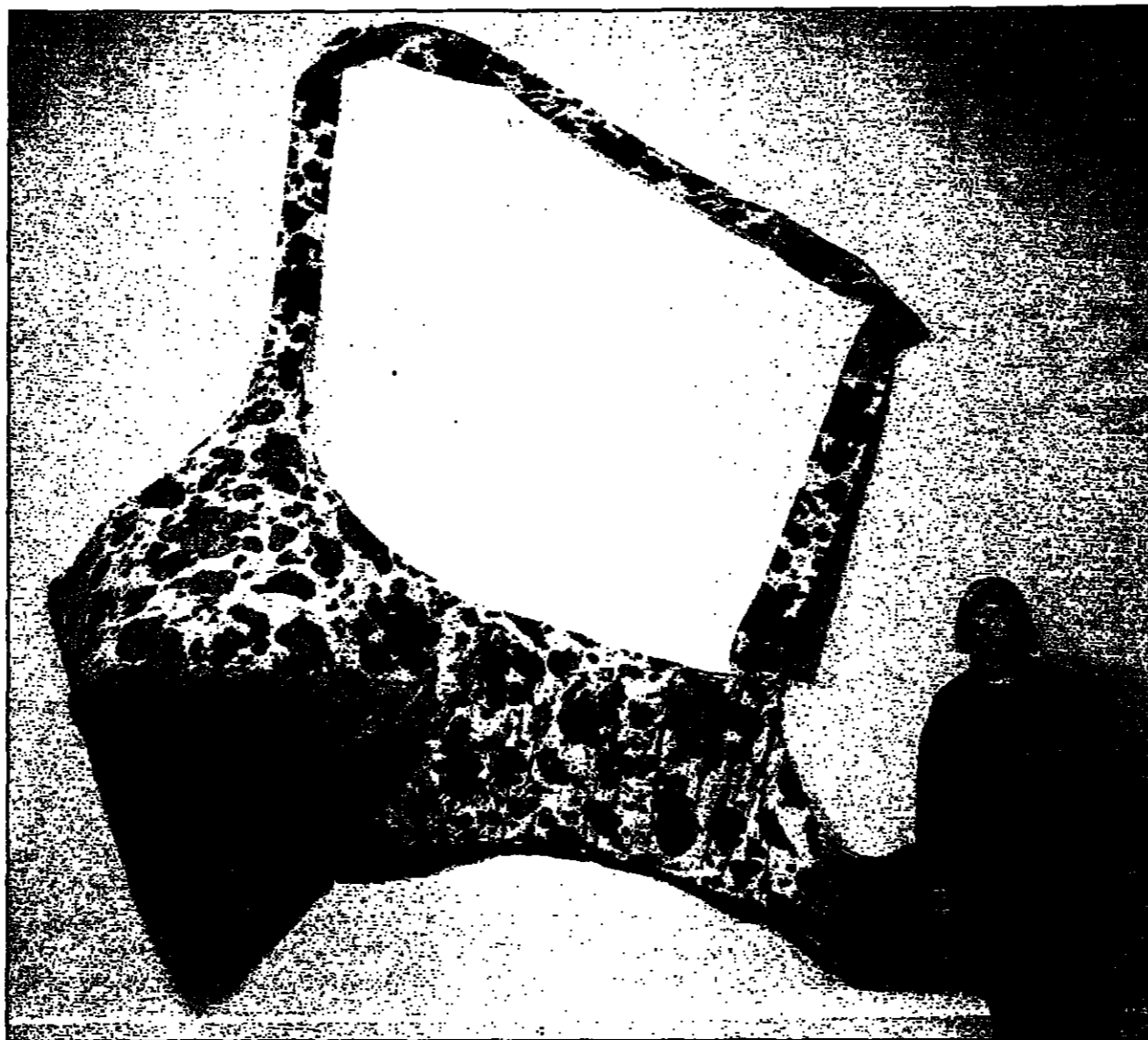
It looked like a feminist plot. And a thinly veiled one at that. This was the Barbican's textile exhibition, *Revelation*, described by freelance curator Lesley Millar as "issue based". The issues: "The Body, Gender, Identity and the Environment".

As every man knows, textiles are women's work. Except that, these days, women "textile artists" with a sense of irony, and sometimes humour, are turning the medium against men. Instead of knitting by the fireside, they are making woolly things such as Tass Mavrogordato's tapestry *It's Thicker Than Water*, which contains images of the warring Simpsons and a disturbed-looking male in a vest sitting below a broken heart. "It deals with the issues of gender stereotyping," she said, rather unnecessarily, at the exhibition opening. "Tapestry is traditionally narrative and political - an old technique that has lost its voice."

Men can play at that, too, you might think. How about a really macho tapestry made of

really macho materials, such as slate and old felt, that weighs a ton and takes six men to hang? Such as Clyde Olliver's *Construction*. Mr Olliver, one of two male artists in the show, is a tough-looking 47-year-old unemployed rent collector, who wears a moustache and silver earrings. His father was a builder. He got the chunks of slate from a Cumbrian spoil heap, made holes in them with a Black and Decker power drill, and sewed them on to felt with linen thread.

"I wanted to put men's materials back into women's work," he said. "I don't have any argument with the feminists, but I do worry about where the men are in all this. After all, male soldiers and sailors were great embroiderers and soldiers were great quilters. I'd like to see that put back into embroidery history." The "issues" seemed to be gathering thick and fast. Jenny Ford, 38, who makes hangings of nylon tulle and latex sheering that look almost wearable, admitted she would never be able to



Liz Nilsson on her 'Cow Tit': 'It's a symbol - one makes a statement just as well as two'

EDWARD SYKES

pursue her art were she not at home, married to a hi-tech car lighting salesman. He was not an artist, she said, "unless you call sport art". However, he was "fully involved and supportive".

But how fully involved and supportive can a husband be expected to be when his wife makes a person-sized single-cup brassiere called *Cow Tit* and commissions studio photographs of naked breasts, titled *36-24-36*, showing them being prodded and measured for symmetry, as if by a male obsessed by page three?

The artist, Liz Nilsson, a

Goldsmiths graduate, met her husband, Brian O'Connell, in Aberdeen, when he was working on an oil rig as a geologist and she was an exchange student from Sweden. The callipers, shown being crudely used to measure bosom cleavage, in the second of the four photographs, belong to his tool kit. He used them to measure the inside diameter of pipes on the rig.

As her husband walked their four-year-old daughter, Molly, round the exhibition, Ms Nilsson explained that the breasts belonged not to her, but to a friend. "I am

showing male society's eyes looking at a female body," she said. "The breasts are being assessed for weight, cleavage, alignment of the nipples and globe shape. I chose these tools, which are out of context and mostly used by men, to show how women are told to present themselves by images in newspapers and magazines."

And the *Cow Tit*? "I am questioning whether the breast is to do just with sex. The initiation cow hide brings us close to thinking of milk. Think how a young mother feels when she discovers that part of her body has adopted a different purpose - feeding a baby. I remember having to breast feed in a pub: you've no reason to feel shy about showing your breast, because it's in a different context: but you do."

Why only one breast? "It's

a symbol: one makes a statement just as well as two."

What did her husband think of her art? At home, she said, her artworks were usually kept in the loft.

"If we had the space," said Mr O'Connell, returning with Molly, "I could live with a giant bra, but the photographs are disturbing."

What did he make of them? "It's about the absurdity of male gaze on female breasts," he ventured. "These are almost mechanical measurements that are being made. It is objectification carried to new lengths. The tools become like torture instruments."

He passed," said Ms Nilsson.

*Revelation: Textile Artists Addressing Issues* to 13 April, entry free (0171-382 7105). Monday-Saturday (10am-7.30pm), Sunday and Bank Holidays (12 noon-7.30pm)

## 'I was a very beige child...'

David Benedict has a night out with Maureen Lipman

SOLO SHOW Live and Kidding  
Duchess Theatre, London

Poor Alma Cogan. She should have died hereafter. In her solo show, *Live and Kidding*, Maureen Lipman joins Victoria Wood as one of the few comedienne who can work a laugh out of the Fifties singer known as "The girl with the laugh in her voice". It's a smart move. Like Alma, Lipman has made a career out of being a nice Jewish (funny) girl and her five best-selling books testify to an audience hungry for her mix of self-confidence and Jewish self-deprecation.

She once told an interviewer what she considered to be the golden rule of comedy. "Tell 'em what you're gonna do, do it, and then tell 'em you've done it. They go wild and think you're wonderful because they're in on the secret." It sounds prosaic, but in the right hands, this sense of complicity works a treat, and the best moments of *Live and Kidding* prove her point. "You know how it is," she seems to say, before launching into another wittily observed anecdote, and for large stretches of the evening we do.

"I was a very beige child," she announces, winning us over with tales of growing up in Hull and her subsequent "hectic, eclectic, eccentric, egocentric life as an ethnic, telephonic Yorkshirewoman," not to mention being a wife, mother and actress. She talks about her son who is in China. "When I say that, most people think he's something big in Wedgwood." When she widens her canvas to talk about life as an actor, things become a little unstuck. Her song about Fiona Shaw-style cross-dressed casting is a tremendously adroit lyric which was great in the RSC's *Shakespeare Revue* but sounds

bafling here. Worse, instead of sticking to the personal, she starts telling jokes. Not only are they not hers, several are past their sell-by date and too many sail over her audience's heads. "Why doesn't an actor look out of the window in the morning? Because then he'll have nothing to do in the afternoon," strikes an all-too-familiar chord with the 80 per cent of Equity who are out of work, but the overwhelmingly middle-aged, middle-class, well-heeled audience don't recognise the gag.

The second half is more successful. Her Joyce Grenfell sketch of an overly talkative American woman turns from rambling amusement to genuine poignancy in a single phrase and her story of almost hyperventilating with excitement ("the baby-sitter was on a life-support machine") at meeting Barbra Streisand is classic Lipman and very funny.

Her terrifying lunch with the Queen at Buckingham Palace is a riot. She clocks her fellow guests: "One captain of industry, one black TV newsreader, one actress, and I knew I was in the plot of an Agatha Christie... and someone was going to die." Laugh? I did, but this resolutely old-fashioned evening (she's even wearing New Look-style dresses) is strangely off centre. You feel worryingly disengaged watching a performer who extracts so much humour from her own persona trading on second-hand stuff. The mostly twee songs further upset the comic rhythm, which means she keeps having to pick up her own pace. She won awards playing Ruth in Bernstein's *Wonderful Town*. What's needed with her meandering material is a little more ruthlessness. To 5 April (0171-494 5075)

Last week's dance and classical reviews were by Louise Levene and Annette Morreau

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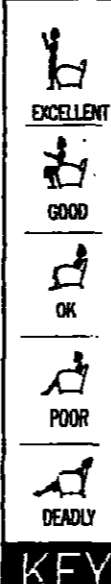
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LAURIE LEWIS

GERAINT LEWIS

	THE FILM	THE OPERA	THE PLAY
	Jerry Maguire	Orpheus and Eurydice	Women on the Verge of HRT
overview	Cameron Crowe of <i>Singles</i> fame directs a new vehicle for Tom Cruise who plays a sports agent who loses his job and gains a conscience. The film has nabbed Oscar nominations for Cruise and Best Picture and done box office in the US. 139 mins, Cert 15, Empire Leicester Square and on general release	Lesley Garrett and Michael Chance sing in Martha Clarke's ENO staging of the 1762 version of Gluck's opera complete with happy ending, conducted by Jane Glover and designed by John Conklin in a co-production with the New York State Opera. At the Coliseum, London WC2 (0171-632 8300) until 19 April.	Marie Jones's part-populist, part-propagandist new play about menopausal women has songs by Neil Martin. The West End opening after its premiere in Northern Ireland in 1995. Jones also stars with Eileen Pollock under Pam Brighton's direction. At the Vaudeville, London WC2 (0171-836 9987). Booking until 31 May.
critical view	John Lyttle pinpointed the movie's masterstroke to be transforming "a star's tardy market repositioning into a sign of the times: white collar, out of work". "It's the screenplay that stands out... has both sharpness and bite in its incidents," praised <i>The Guardian</i> . "Cruise gives a good performance but it hardly warrants an Oscar nomination," sniffed <i>The Times</i> . "A happy-clappy fraud of a film... <i>Forrest Gump</i> with beauty and brains," sneered the <i>Standard</i> . "Lauded elsewhere as a witty moral fable [it is, in fact... deeply reactionary fare," snarled <i>Time Out</i> . "A high-decibel fanfare for the status quo," concluded the <i>FT</i> .	Edward Seckerson eulogised over "its wonderfully subdued colourations... beautifully mirrored in the... texture of her staging." Not so Jane Glover's conducting in which "a greyness pervades". "Arty farty," snorted the <i>FT</i> . "Achieves the almost miraculous feat of turning one of the most harrowing emotional operas into a limp little affair," withered <i>The Guardian</i> . "I quite liked Clarke's attempt to free Gluck from the neo-classical tag: no ionic pillars or white togas," smiled <i>The Telegraph</i> . "Honest, beautiful simplicity in this big space... there is nothing monochromatic about Jane Glover's conducting," asserted <i>The Times</i> .	Paul Taylor found it "an enjoyable but patchy comedy". "Hardly great but it undoubtedly offers honest, professionally outspoken entertainment on a subject which could cause complacent men in the audience a few hot flushes of their own," mused <i>The Telegraph</i> . "Deeply provincial... merely a soft feelgood core... Menopausal defiance, when given ballad treatment, turns into marshmallow," frowned the <i>FT</i> . "It's a forceful, pugnacious evening but, at the end, I had the feeling that in telling a West End audience that women over 40 should have a full, rich sex life, it was preaching to the converted," preached <i>The Guardian</i> .
our view	Crowe's script and direction gives Cruise the chance to grow up and act.	A weak ending from all departments spoils an otherwise strong evening.	The flipside of the Cliff Richard experience. A refreshing change from all the "Boy's Own" new plays.



KEY

# Panto? Oh yes it is

It may be March, but tickets for Hotwells 'Aladdin' are like gold dust. By Philip Sweeney

There are two hot tickets in Bristol this weekend. Not the Theatre Royal's acclaimed production of *As You Like It* - plenty of seats still available. The only venues sold out weeks ago are the Hippodrome, for the English National Ballet, and a considerably smaller institution, a mile away out in Hotwells, the Hope Centre, where tickets for the annual pantomime in its usual eccentric March slot, are like gold dust.

The Hope Centre is a converted 18th-century stone congregational chapel, standing squarely among ivy-clad gravestones in the hilly tangle of Georgian and Victorian terraces comprising Hotwells and Clifton-wood. This is a lovely, mixed area, middle class mostly, but rarely posh, a sort of Notting Hill to the Kensington of its grander neighbour, Clifton. In the 18 years since its rescue from demolition and conversion into a community centre, the Hope Centre has offered theatre and music shows, sports, a crèche, yoga classes, dances, a weekly market, and lunches of startlingly high quality in its small school-room-like café. Since 1981, the Hope Centre's flagship fund-raiser has been the pantomime, an institution of sufficient legend that relatives and expatriate Hotwellians converge for the weekend from as far afield as Sussex.

Why March? "A group of us were sitting around one day after Christmas saying how dull January and February are, so we decided to fill the gap," says Sue Stops, pantomime founder and joint director of this year's production of *Aladdin*. It's a Wednesday evening in February, and already halfway through the traditional production schedule: Mrs Stops, a teacher, has an astute grasp of the pantomime, formed by 17 years of panto and a brother-in-law in the business as a member of the Bristol

Old Vic Theatre Company. "Problems at this stage? Getting them to learn their lines. And project them, now. The trouble with amateurs is they save themselves for the night."

On stage, Tim Stevens, a chartered surveyor, is grappling with the nuances of the character of the High Pong, ruler of Hong Pong (this *Aladdin* is set, for reasons no one can specify, in Hong Kong). The trouble



is the Hong Pong isn't exactly good nor really bad. Paul Crosswhite, a physics teacher and father of one of the most pantomime-famously families in Hotwells, is refining the leers and cackles of his Abanazar - "just about the nastiest, slimiest and most dishonest person to appear in the Hotwells panto" - while his 15-year-old daughter, Jenny, making her starring debut as Princess Bel, adjusts the kimono

she's found for her costume. Upstairs, social worker Cathy Crosswhite, Jenny's mother, is cutting out costume patterns and studying dance routines as a member of the Ambros, a comic female dance chorus named after the local street, ever since their debut with *The Dance of the Ambros*. This rehearsal begins with an announcement by Rick Goldsmith, chartered accountant, treasurer of the Hope Centre management committee and temporary emcee. "Bit of a cash crisis this month at the Hope Centre - if everyone could try to get ticket money in advance it'd be a great help."

The pantomime, it transpires, is of greater significance than ever this year. Bristol council leisure committee has just cut Hope Centre's support grant by £6,000, on the grounds that it's not an arts institution, which threatens the operation of the centre's programme through the summer and could in turn undermine credibility in applying for £700,000 of lottery money to fund a major expansion. The pantomime, entirely paid for by its participants, brings in £1,000 a night in ticket money, a significant chunk in a total turnover of £100,000. Annie Scott, architect to the Hope Centre scheme, Soot of Abanazar's baddie trio, Sweet, Sour and Sorry, and mother of two other architects, one Wishy Wasby, the other resting, explains the economic situation. "We want to excavate the vault to enlarge the bar, reopen the main entrance and expand the auditorium. The folding seating needs to be replaced, to increase capacity from 110 to 300, which will allow bigger audiences and more profits."

The success of the Hotwells pantomime is founded on more than just community spirit and high jinks. The scripts manage to balance broad humour, fun for the kids and more sophisticated overtones for the



Chorus line: performers balance humour and fun with sophisticated overtones for adults

PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER JONES

adults. Centres of excellence have developed in the fields of both scenery and music, overseen respectively by Janet Magrie and Sue Otty. Janet Magrie, an art historian, first heard of the pantomime from a fellow passenger on an architectural coach tour in Germany, moved to Bristol, signed on as scene painter and got hooked. This year, she's marshalling a couple of dozen volunteers and a budget of £30, most of which has gone on a huge roll of white nylon to create willow-pattern backdrops, caves and castles. Local artist Liz Vibert is painting two giant portraits of the High Pong and scientific editor and puppeteer Di Sied is creating a giant working mangle for the laundry scene.

Sue Otty, solicitor, music teacher and community activist, is directing as always a full eight-piece band, including a member of the National Youth Chamber Orchestra on cello.

On Thursday night, 30 hours of increasingly frantic rehearsals bear fruit, and amid much wishing of "break a leg", it's first night. On the whole, things go well. Tim Stevens invests the High Pong with sufficient mournful quirkiness to get laughs. Local GP Keith Erskine is a splendidly fruity Widow Twanky and a *coup de théâtre* is provided by the chorus, operating temporarily as the Fish Gutters, who produce handfuls of pink foam entrails from their fish in mid-song to shower the

audience. On the other hand, the washing-lines jam and the smoke shows a tendency to follow rather than precede the genies. Afterwards, in the Rose of Denmark, the cast post-mortem the evening - the blunders, the triumphs, the celebrities in the audience like the Lord Mayor and the actor Norman Bowler from *Emmerdale*, whose wife, Di, is an Ambra. Sue Stops, trenchant as ever, has more serious matters in mind - professional peer approval.

Terry Milton of the Hedley Players is coming on Saturday. They're really good. We're going to have to tighten it all up. *Hotwells 'Aladdin' is sold out. For further information about events at the Hope Centre, Hotwells, Bristol call 0117-921 5271*

## Out of the ashes of war...

... Cologne experienced a musical explosion. But now the orchestral good life is under threat. Michael Church looks to the future

When the Allies had finished with Cologne, it looked like the surface of the moon. In the centre only the cathedral was left standing, as though protected by some macabre miracle from the surrounding devastation. But this had always been a musical city, and it was music which helped set it back on its feet.

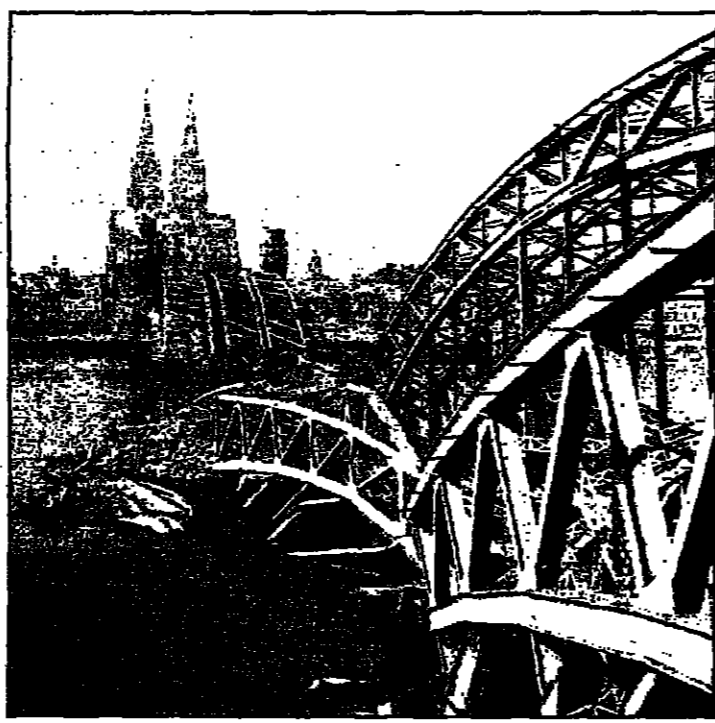
A year after war ended, the local radio station was given a symphony orchestra. And, as its current boss Heiner Müller-Adolphi explains, this orchestra saw its prime job as administering cultural first-aid. "People desperately wanted to hear the music they had missed during the Nazi regime, Schoenberg and Webern and Bartok and jazz - all the things which had been proscribed as decadent. They felt completely cut off from international musical life." When the new radio building was opened in 1953, Stravinsky marked the occasion by conducting the first German performance of his opera *Oedipus Rex*. A year later, the radio station spawned a baroque ensemble.

It also gave birth to something with bigger repercussions. Tape recorders had been pioneered by German radio, but it was the Frenchman Pierre Schaeffer who in 1948 first used one to produce that collage of "found" sounds known as *musique concrète*. In 1951 Cologne Radio went one better and founded the electronic

studio where Karlheinz Stockhausen launched the experimental odyssey on which he is still engaged today. His *Gesung der Sirenen* - in which the recording of a boy singing the *Benedicite* was spliced with electronically generated sound - represented music's boldest leap since Schoenberg.

As Stockhausen got into his stride, composers like the Romanian Iannis Xenakis and the Italian Luigi Nono joined in. Meanwhile Hans Werner Henze and the Argentinian Mauricio Kagel came to stay - and also, with Stockhausen, to teach at the new conservatoire. Students who caught the virus of experimentalism stayed on as professional performers, thanks to the avant-garde policies of the radio orchestra. They found a ready-made public. Thus did Cologne become the new-music capital of the world. Even today, Stockhausen (putting quartets in helicopters), Henze (reverting to romanticism) and the increasingly Dadaist Kagel are local eminences grises, while their students roam performance-art's wilder shores.

Cologne's cathedral precinct bristles with music shops, in several of which a book entitled *Music Law* is prominently displayed. This is significant: musicians in Germany's 120 state orchestras have rights that are the envy of musicians elsewhere. They earn over £40,000 a year, and are all on life-contracts.



Music helped a devastated Cologne back on its feet

HULTON GETTY

They can go in at 21, and retire 44 years later after a stress-free career (there seem to be no tales in Cologne to match London's horror stories of second violinists devouring beta-blockers before they play).

But, as all the world knows, Ger-

many's economic miracle is on the point of collapse, and the orchestral good life is suddenly under threat. A straw poll of key musical figures in Cologne reveals sharp disagreement over the future of these hallowed contracts. Müller-Adolphi says he has

long wanted to see three-year contracts - "otherwise people can get lazy, go soft" - but the unions have always vetoed that. "But as cities start to go broke, they will not be able to afford life-contracts any more. Finally the unions will have to accept this."

Not so, says a senior cellist in his orchestra. "Life-contracts are normal in all German professions, and no conductor or administrator will be able to change it. If you are at the top level of ability, you have the right to be safe in your employment." Yes, age may sometimes reduce physical competence - "but, if you are older, you have more experience, so it balances out." An administrator at another orchestra, despairing at the difficulty of trying to remove tired players, glumly remarks that it would actually be easier to close orchestras down than abolish life-contracts.

Hans Vonk, the laid-back Dutchman who has been principal conductor of the Radio Symphony Orchestra for the past six years, is glad for his players' good fortune - and rates their work high - but thinks a shade more stress might produce even better results. That's as may be, however, because at the end of this season he's off to St Louis - succeeding the charismatic Leonard Slatkin - and his departure is provoking frantic manoeuvres behind the scenes.

For, as Munich is currently finding - conductorless since the death of

Celibidache - there are not enough charismatic conductors to go round. The RSO has appointed a "finding committee" with representatives from the rank and file, and everyone has had the right to make nominations. These have been whittled down to three - André Previn, Neeme Järvi and Semyon Bychkov - each of whom is currently doing concerts which are, in effect, auditions. The contest is all-cry gentlemanly, and it's all officially denied, but everyone is agog, because much depends on the outcome.

When asked to crystal-gaze 10 years hence, Vonk gives a candid reply: "I see fewer orchestras, less rehearsal time, lower pay, and shorter contracts. Everything will be more difficult." He then adds that he hopes the Radio Symphony "doesn't make the same mistake which the South Bank made in London. I don't want to see them retreat into the safe haven of Beethoven's Fifth and Khachaturian's Fifth." He was shocked to be asked, on a recent visit to London, to hop off a "difficult" work by the Cologne avant-gardist Bernd Alois Zimmermann, on the grounds that it might put punters off. (This, presumably, before ENO turned the same composer's *Die Soldaten* into a hit.) "The orchestra absolutely must preserve their taste for adventure."

This sentiment may be somewhat undercut by the "safe" repertoire they're bringing to Britain this week

(Weber, Mendelssohn and Brahms), but it is vigorously echoed by Renate Liesmann, Cologne's leading new-music co-ordinator. "This city has offered a protective biosphere in which composers from all over the world have been able to make their experiments, but this biosphere is now under threat. Our cultural life is getting more and more expensive, and there is less and less scope for inspiration. People won't admit it yet, but everyone can sense that some fundamental change is in the air."

At which point it seems appropriate to seek the view at Cologne's 100-year-old Philharmonie - acoustically one of the best halls in the world. Business, say its bosses, has never been better, and that goes for the avant-garde stuff as well. This spring they are holding their second Musikfrühstück, in which the names of Rattle, Barenboim, Kremer and Björk figure with equal prominence. On two successive nights I find the 2,200-seater hall packed, with long queues for returns.

Music in post-war Cologne has followed a huge arc - rising from the ruins, cruising the heights - but it's not going to crash back down to earth just yet.

Cologne RSO on tour: Sun, Bridgewater Hall, Manchester (0161-907 9900); Mon, RFH, London (0171-960 4242); Tue, Symphony Hall, Birmingham (0121-212 3333)

## French without tears

DANCE Decodex, New Victoria Theatre, Woking

Remember the 1992 Winter Olympics opening ceremony? Me neither. However, this televised extravaganza catapulted the dancemaker and illusionist Philippe Decodex to fame. His latest show, *Decodex*, has been touring Europe to packed houses since 1995 and is currently making his farewell performances as the highlight of the Woking Dance Umbrella. When I last saw Decodex's company at London's Almeida Theatre 10 years ago in *Technicolor* he was working on a far humbler scale, content with a handful of men and a step-ladder. Yet all the elements were in place: the acrobatic dance, the circus skills, the Gallic wit and whimsy - lessons learnt at the feet of men like Marcel Marceau and Alwin Nikolais. The American showman's early influence, combined with Decodex's more recent collaboration with costume fantasist Philippe Guillelot, gave birth to *Decodex*, a surreal hybrid of dance and circus.

The work is filled with other-worldly images delivered in bewildering succession. Stripy dancers with their feet encased in giant fish-tail flippers lollop about the stage while Dorianque Wilkig's flickering projections play on their eerily phosphorescent costumes. A figure enters, his hands replaced by snaking tentacles four-feet long, which flick around his body like huge fly whisks. Enter two men in suits carrying a bald man in a vast inflatable

white bag, which he attacks like a clueless bachelorette in a fight with a duvet cover. Three dancers surround their bodies with long concertina-like hoses forming a sort of human Pongpoid Centre.

Some of these visual effects are reminiscent of other prop-crazed illusionists like Moses Pendleton's *Momix* or Victoria Chaplin's *Circle Invisible*. Happily, *Decodex* is free of Pendleton's cutesy vulgarity and Chaplin's flaccid feyness. Decodex's more robust wit is a big help - as are the dancers themselves. Available in all shapes and sizes, they peep over their spectacles from time to time to deliver fleeting phrases of pure dance performed with great style. The audience, which featured a lot of young children and teenagers, was amused and appreciative.

I liked it, too, but I was very grateful to find it a good half-hour short of the advertised 90 minutes. A lot of it was beautiful. It's sensationally dressed, Eric Wurtz's lighting is inspired, the music and the moods are varied but flicking through a crazy catalogue of images can become somewhat enervating if it hasn't been indexed by a guiding intelligence and fortified with just a pinch of meaning. Maybe it's just a language barrier: perhaps Decodex is merely proving that you can speak French without saying a word. Today 2.30 & 8pm (01483 761144) Louise Lavene

## Ruling passion

CLASSICAL Monteverdi's Orfeo Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, and touring

Kent Opera's carefully paced restoration has gained fresh energy with a compelling production of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, accessible in style and delivered by an attractive young cast. Here is a company determined to make the most of its resources and committed to the idea of stimulating its audiences, a combination that made up for any occasional shortcomings in the quality of its performers.

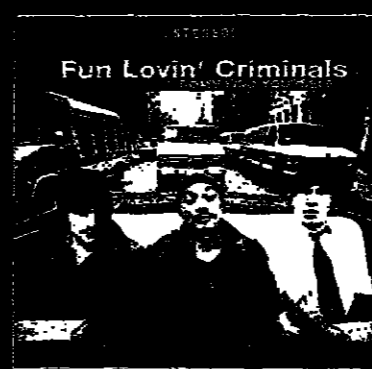
The dramatic power of Monteverdi's work was revealed without robbing any of its intimacy, projecting Orfeo's despair clearly and underlining the character's frailty. Tim Carroll's staging proved satisfyingly simple, enlivened by Terry Gilbert's graceful treatment of the choral dances and assured choreography elsewhere. Kent Opera stalwart Roger Butlin struck a convincing balance between classical austerity and Baroque excess in his designs, presenting a monolithic backdrop to the realm of Hades and conjuring up a lurid vision of its infernal inhabitants that would have pleased Peter Greenaway. Paul Grier's blubbery Charon was suitably repellent, wearing a bald wig, a leather corset and enough chains to suggest that fans of bondage need not abandon all hope of fun in the Underworld.

Gwion Thomas was in heroic form as Orfeo, rich of voice and entirely at ease with the wide range of his part. The smoothness of his legato and effortless delivery of the text gave an

impression of Italian warmth, not always reproduced by others in the cast who stumbled over the dipthongs and other linguistic hurdles of Anne Ridler's idiomatic English translation. Above all, Thomas had an innate feeling for the style of Monteverdi's monody, outlining his plea to Charon in the third act with heart-breaking tenderness and bringing an unforced naturalness to his final lament for Euridice. Likewise, Rachel Wheatley's pure-voiced Euridice, Juliet Schiemann's alluring Hope and Clara Sanabras's Messenger were founded on the principles of good singing, expressive in their response to the text and imaginative in their variations of tone colour. The Pluto of Martin Robson was suitably implacable, a cold-hearted complement to the likeable Proserpina of Esther King, while Paul Grier suggested that beefy Charon was blessed with a hint of human kindness.

Rhythmic freedom was encouraged by music director John Toll and his admirable team of continuo players. Debates about the speed of dances and the ritornelli in early Baroque opera seem irrelevant when a work is conditioned by a desire to highlight the drama and passion of the music. Toll focused on the tragedy of Orfeo and Euridice, which was exploited by the company's principal players and convincingly conveyed in the choral numbers following Euridice's death. Andrew Stewart

## FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS



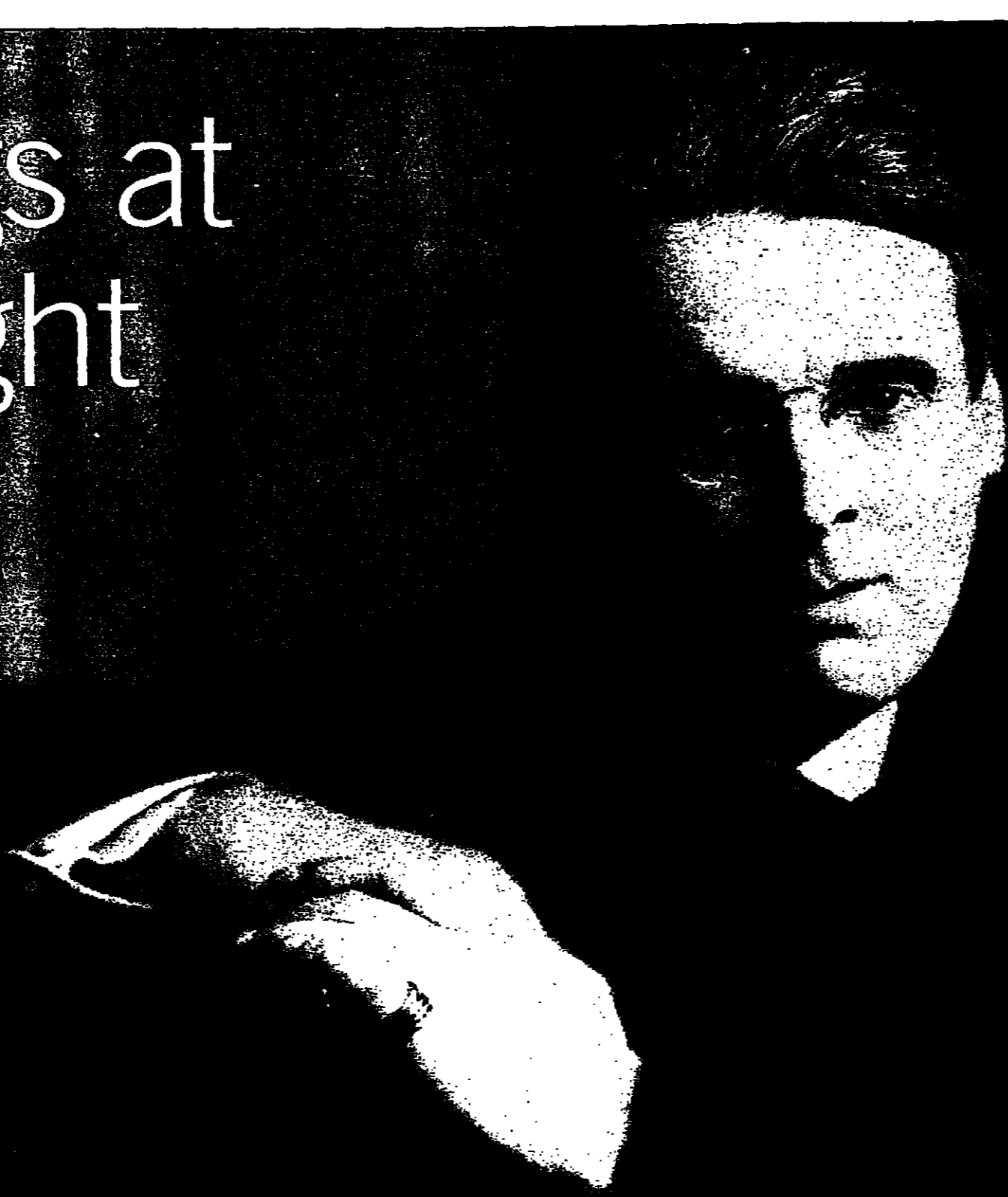
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 "They blend gangsta rap reality with gangster flick fictional capers" DJ

FLC live in the UK in March/April  
 check press for details

# Songs at twilight

Terry Eagleton  
treads softly on  
an Irish bard's  
dreams



W B Yeats: 'Torn all his life between the smell of horses and the odour of sanctity'

PHOTOGRAPH: LENA CONNELL ©1990

W B Yeats: a life. Vol I: *The Apprentice Mage, 1865-1914*  
by R F Foster,  
Oxford University Press, £25

'You were silly like us,' WH Auden wrote of Yeats, but he was really just being polite: Yeats was a lot sillier than almost any of us. Few poets of comparable greatness have believed such extravagant nonsense. Spiritualism, theosophy, astral bodies, occultism, and (some would add) Irish Fenianism: Yeats managed to swallow all of this, along with regular doses of hashish and mesocaine. 'I was once afraid of turning out reasonable,' he wrote to a colleague, but the anxiety was quite misplaced.

At one spiritualist seance, he was urgently buttonholed by a ghostly voice as 'Mr Gates', consoling evidence that not even the spirit world is free from human error. Yeats displayed a remarkable capacity to credit almost any high-toned gobbledygook currently in fashion, and in the spook-ridden *fin-de-siècle* there was a lot of it on offer. This was especially true of pre-revolutionary Ireland, where it was easy to cross over from gun-running

to Rosicrucianism. But Yeats combined this gullibility with a tough-minded refusal of anything as vulgarly constricting as belief, and for the most part kept it well out of his poetry, like some brilliant surgeon who proves able to stitch up a heart even when hallucinating.

He was also more contradictory than most of us. If he was occult and oracular he was also an operator, scheming and caballing in quarrelsome Ireland while preserving an air of disinterested Olympian wisdom. Investing a ferocious Victorian energy in post-Victorian affairs, he launched the Irish literary revival and the Abbey theatre, but was so absent-minded that he once had to ask a waiter at his club whether he had eaten his dinner or not.

He was a Protestant gentleman among nationalist schoolteachers, a hardheaded businessman who believed in fairies, a distinguished man of letters who couldn't spell the word 'feel', a would-be aristocrat who lounged in country houses and celebrated the simple peasantry. A charming, distracted figure loftily aloof from politics, he was in later life an enthusiast for racist eugenics, blood élites and the cleansing power of military violence. As a flamboyant egocentric, he dreamed of

extinguishing the self, and was torn all his life between the smell of horses and the odour of sanctity.

It is doubtful that Yeats would have altogether approved of biographies, though he penned one or two such fragments himself. What he valued in life was what could be transmuted into art, which life could then imitate if it pleased: and like his compatriot Oscar Wilde, he conducted his personal existence as a kind of public mythology. The self was not something to be observed but a tool to be used, putting the cat out but was a sort of artistic self-fashioning, an heroic enterprise to be lived with one canny eye on how it would all look to the historians. Ordinary life could be left to servants and shopkeepers – or to the materialist English, whose passion for realist novels he always thought faintly ill-bred.

The official biography, even so, is here at last, after two false starts: one by the critic Denis Donoghue, and one by the Irish historian Leland Lyons, or 'British Leland', as those compatriots who found him a shade too suburban-English might have called him. *The Apprentice Mage*, which takes Yeats's life up to the brink of his fiftieth year, is a marvel of painstaking historical research, which distils a formidable heap of evidence into a

splendidly elegant narrative. R F Foster has a remarkably shrewd, worldly-wise sort of mind, at once tough and generous, and resists both idolatry and iconoclasm in this magnificently sane account. It is also for the most part a remarkably judicious, even-handed portrait, which in the snake-pit of Irish studies these days is something of a minor miracle.

As a leading 'revisionist' Irish historian, Roy Foster is well-known for his suave massaging of Irish history to take the pain out of it: the man who made Commemora safe for Camden Town. There are hints of that here – Yeats's lover Maud Gonne is hammered for her anti-Semitism but the High Table scoffing at aspects of Gaelic culture which disfigures his work elsewhere is here thankfully muted.

In another sense, however, this book lacks some of Foster's sterling historical virtues. His work *Modern Ireland* displays a kind of long-headedness, a plucking of trends and patterns from the ruck of historical detail, which *The Apprentice Mage* notably lacks.

This meticulous, blow-by-blow account, which takes Yeats from his art-school days through to the Irish Revival, London literary life, early nationalism, the founding

of the Abbey theatre and his first encounters with Ezra Pound, commits the familiar biographer's mistake of concealing the wood with the trees. Intent on his deft brushstrokes, Foster hardly ever steps back from the canvas to size up the full figure evolving beneath his art. That he can discern significant patterns is clear enough; it is just that he too often fails to let the reader in on them. One has the curious sense that Foster knows quite a bit more about Yeats than he is telling us.

After some quarter-of-a-million words, it is hard to know what, say, Yeats's dominant aesthetic ideas were, or how to assess the relations between his work and European modernism. What was it about a late 19th-century colonial backwater which managed to produce such a world-class poet, and how was Yeats at once the child of that context and creatively askew to it? Foster's whole treatment is too briskly externalised, too much a question of the dental treatment which kept the poet in London during a June heatwave.

Understandably anxious that other biographers have been there before him, Foster has decided to concentrate less on what the poet wrote than on what he did; but it is a hard distinction to sustain, and in any case Yeats's poetry enthralls us

more than his dining habits. One suspects that it might enthrall Foster more too, given the fineness of his odd flashes of literary analysis; but the sensitive critic is grimly subordinated to the workaday historian. For all its perceptiveness, the book is oddly unreflective.

Some English readers, obsessed with 'real life' and sceptical of big ideas, will doubtless find this limitation a virtue. But this sumptuous, astutely intelligent work hasn't even much bold reevaluation to offer of the life. Here, at least, one could wish for a little more abrasive revisionism. *The Apprentice Mage* marvellously fills out the familiar contours of the poet's frenetic life, but does little to reshape them. After some 500 pages, we know incomparably more about this self-mythologising maestro than we did, but little of what we learn challenges the received images of him.

Perhaps such an overview will emerge in Volume Two, but by then there will be an enormous amount to summarise. Anyway, it will be interesting to see how Foster deals with the more embarrassing aspects of his protagonists' later quasi-fascist views – whether their repugnance will be blandly massaged away, or candidly confronted.

## Fillips from the Prince

Piers Brendon meets the best sort of consort

Albert: uncrowned king by Stanley Weintraub, John Murray, £25

It's hard to see how a biographer could find anything new to say about Prince Albert short of suggesting, as Lytton Strachey wanted to, that he was homosexual or (in the spirit of Michael Bloch) that he was a woman. With heroic restraint Professor Stanley Weintraub advances no such proposition. But he must have felt more than usually tempted to embrace novelty, for he has already written a long life of Queen Victoria.

The present book – much better than its error-prone predecessor – is therefore, in his phrase, a 'parallel biography'. However, almost from the first the lines are intimately entwined.

After a miserable childhood in the disolute Coburg court, Albert inexplicably emerged as a full-grown Victorian – earnest, diligent, priggish and philoprogenitive. Coburg being, as Bismarck remarked, the royal 'stud-farm of Europe', Albert was presented to the wilful young Victoria, who swiftly fell in love with him. She was entranced by his handsome appearance: 'such beautiful blue eyes, and exquisite nose, and such a pretty mouth with delicate moustachios'. Albert reciprocated. Writing to Lord Melbourne after her 'most gratifying and bewildering' wedding night, Victoria said that she never thought she 'could be so loved'.

Familiar stuff, but Weintraub does his best to avoid the inevitable overlap by focusing on the character and career of the Consort. He crafts a vivid, gossipy and sometimes irreverent portrait, without the retrospective sycophancy that entreats so many English royal biographies. And he gives an account of

princely industry which is awesome even in recapitulation.

Albert strove to improve working-class housing and to modernise the army. He promoted the arts and sciences. He supported innumerable charities and chaired interminable committees. He was patron of the London Library, Chancellor of Cambridge University and president of the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade. Albert not only masterminded the Great Exhibition but checked to see if the objects displayed at the Crystal Palace were correctly labelled. And he oversaw the spending of its profits on the complex of museums, colleges and concert halls in South Kensington, nicknamed Albertopolis.

Despite his efforts, or because of them, the Prince was never really popular. At first derided as an alien fortune-hunter, he was later lampooned (in ribald terms) as the procreator of a race of royal parasites. Albert gave offence by his frigid hauteur (partly a result of shyness about speaking English) and by his obvious boredom with high society. He preferred servants, but even they were churlish: Carlyle referred to 'His Serene Highness the Incarnate-Solecism Prince Albert'. In 1854 crowds rejoiced outside the Tower of London when it was rumoured that Albert was imprisoned there for treason.

The politicians were also ungracious. Melbourne resented the upright Albert, complaining that 'this damned morality will undo us all'. Peel, whom the Prince revered, told the cabinet that the royal couple should not be thwarted but managed. Palmerston regarded Albert as an exalted nuisance. Disraeli, suspected by the Prince of harbouring dangerous 'democratic tendencies',

said that if Albert had survived he would have introduced England to the benefits of absolute rule.

This was characteristic hyperbole. But Weintraub's own conclusion, that a 'democratising' Albert 'salvaged the Crown as a pillar of the emerging constitutional state', is equally misleading. Far from being above politics, the Prince was a committed Conservative. He thought the monarch must 'necessarily be a politician' and had a duty to 'watch and control' the government.

Albert's early death in 1861 (from stomach cancer, Weintraub reckons, not typhoid) and Victoria's grief-stricken withdrawal from public life significantly reduced the power of the crown. But during his life-time the Prince learnt to play his cards effectively in the game of whist which is, as Metternich remarked, Britain's unwritten constitution. He made particularly important contributions to foreign policy, perhaps even preventing the country from becoming embroiled in the American Civil War. Albert earned his title of Prince Consort in a way that has been impossible for the present consort.

Actually, Albert had much in common with Prince Philip. He had the unfailing Hanoverian antipathy to his heir, whom he tried unsuccessfully to mould in his own image. He employed the same scatter-gun technique for insulting foreigners: 'the Poles are as little deserving of sympathy as the Irish'. He loathed the 'miserable scribblers' of the press and favoured censorship. He was a victim of 'rifle mania' and shot animals for pleasure while campaigning against cruel sports.

He loved the luxurious royal yacht and failed to notice that all non-royal personages on board were consigned to



Albert: 'Victim of rifle mania'

'dog-holes'. Both princes appeared once in the gallery of the House of Commons: Albert being warned off by Disraeli, Philip provoking a protest from Enoch Powell.

Precisely because Philip might imitate Albert, courtiers and politicians kept him firmly away from the throne. From the royalist point of view they were right since, even as 'a bloody amoeba' (his expression), Philip has damaged the monarchy enough to become the darling of republicans. But Albert himself, much abler and unencumbered by rumours about his private life, was not made King Consort.

As Melbourne sagely advised the disappointed Victoria, if Britons ever got into the way of making their kings they would soon get into the way of unmaking them. So 'Albert the Good', as his wife's sobriquet 'Queen Albertine' piquantly suggests and as this book entertainingly confirms, had to make do with being sovereign in all but name.

## In the key of life

Dermot Clinch detects some false notes

A sequential story', writes a character in this novel, 'Isn't necessarily a straight story.' So be warned. In *The Biography of Thomas Lang* – biography by name, fractured post-modern novel by nature – there is not a straight story in sight. The novel is framed as an exchange of letters, though also stuffed with essay, allegory, fable. Though containing biography it expends plenty of time and effort questioning biography's purpose.

Thomas Lang is a recently deceased pianist. He performed with Karajan and Abbado; his playing was 'marked by fierce control and economy of means'; he refused to give encores, but the applause would be in 'full spate' ten minutes after his last bow. He was a 'genius', his biographer tells us. All looks set for a ripping biography – except that the author, Michael Dessauer, has a problem. His principal source – Lang's brother – is not cooperating.

The biographer's campaign of coaxing letters, along with Christopher Lang's replies – resisting, misleading, rapidly giving in – provide the momentum. Neither biographer nor source, we realise, is entirely trustworthy. The correspondence, it's clear, is a pretext for a debate about the nature of biography and identity. Dessauer is on the traditional wing. 'The Thomas Lang of my book', he insists, 'will perhaps be closer to the whole man than the character perceived by any simple person who knew him.' Lang retorts that the book is 'an absurdity, a kind of Platonic super-life, an impossible feat of pedantic devotion and clairvoyance.'

It's a novel driven not by character or narrative but ideas. The pianist himself – Glenn Gould magnified *ad absurdum* – is tossed about by the heavy conceptual seas. Reclusive, obsessive, a pianist who storms out of performances, he is a strange, distinctly unprofessional but recognisable type. Even his most controversial recording remains just the right side of plausibility. Beethoven's last sonata, in wildly opposed interpretations on either side of an LP.

The narrative, such as we can piece it together, is neatly constructed. But it's the stuffing of ideas that Jonathan Buckley is really bothered about. Want to read an essay on 'Busoni Contra Wagner'? Lang wrote one and here it is. Keen on 'cod-Arthurian'

allegorical tales examining the selective nature of love and understanding? The Lady of Dolorian, pages 139-147, is such an one. What is a biography? What is the nature of performance, of artistic sincerity? The reader may not emerge with the answers. But if any of the author's admirably sharp musical scepticism rubs off on us we'll be doing just fine.

It's a sharp, intelligent novel, which makes its single, overwhelming misjudgement the more surprising. Dessauer we can put up with. He is a pedant, but he is credible. The Lang brothers are not. A more arch, irritating pair of characters, in fact, I have never spent time with. Instead of having a plain lunch, Thomas speaks of 'doing battle with a bacterial baguette'. This taxes our patience enough. But Christopher, with his parody of camp superiority in every utterance, takes us over the edge. 'Musings on musicianship are like watching elephants waltzing over daisies,' reads one letter critical of the biographer's method. 'There is no reason to be ashamed of dedication to the quotidian, as Tom might once have told me, *avantis VII*.' The quotidian task of Dessauer is to read these affected, squirming letters. The reader's duty may just lead elsewhere.

# Barre room brawls

Michael Church on body language

Reading Dance by Judith Mackrell, Michael Joseph, £20

Time was when the "meaning" of dance was crystal-clear: the mimed conventions of story-ballets left audiences in no doubt as to the goodies and bad-dies, who was unhappy, and why. When the Fairies of Purity, Generosity and Eloquence took the stage at the Swan Lake ball, each moved in a manner consonant with her quality. When the magic worked, there was mystery in abundance, but no mystification. This art was accessible to all who could afford a ticket.

If contemporary dance is "about" anything, it's usually about itself: fine for initiates, but deeply mystifying for everyone else. Judith Mackrell's book may sound like a postgrad primer, but she opens with a nicely populist question: if there is a language of dance, how can we understand it? Her answer is encouraging: all we need is "a willingness to let the movement play on our senses, to let its rhythms charge up our pulses, and to let its pictures range around our imaginations".

Dance, she says, is as ambiguous as music; we discuss its patterns in terms of architecture, balance, line; we speak of bodies having sculptural form; we call dance abstract. But this, she argues, contradicts a basic truth about dance, which is that it is always human. As abstraction's pioneer Balanchine observed, "Put a man and a girl on stage and there is already a story. A man and two girls, there's already a plot".

Mackrell plots the course by which Petipa's *Swan Lake* has transmogrified into Matthew Bourne's male-swan crowd-puller via a series of stylistic revolutions. The aristocratic elegance of Tzarist ballet was upended by Diaghilev, who harnessed the brightest talents from all the arts to forge his astonishing, amalgam. Choreographic revolutionary though he was, Nijinsky still kept faith with his balletic roots: Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham shook dance free of classical convention. The pull of gravity, which ballet had denied, was now embraced. Emotion became raw; a new breed of woman emerged.

Then came Merce Cunningham, aided and abetted by John Cage. His choreography was determined by the throw of dice and set to the pulse of a stop-watch. Then came minimalism - "No to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make-believe!" shrieked a manifesto - and its attendant obsessions with ordinariness, improvisation, and trace-like repetition. Meanwhile ethnic minorities - black in America, Asian in Britain - were enriching the mixture. The dance world fragmented into a thousand schools, each with its resident guru. Past guard had emerged by apostolic succession - Paul Taylor worked for Martha Graham, and nurtured Twyla Tharp and Pina Bausch. Today's gurus emerge from media studies seminars.

Mackrell is outstandingly good on the masterpieces created in St



Ballet go upwards: Daniel Ezralow in action on the edge of a high hill taken from 'Dancers' by Philip Trager (Bulfinch)

Petersburg and Paris. Her prose is clean, vivid, and evocative; her vignettes on *Giselle*, *Apollo*, and the *Rite of Spring* are superb pieces of critical writing. Her short essays on Isadora and Graham give more illumination than whole books have done in the past. But half-way through *Reading Dance* something unfortunate happens. Mackrell's prose acquires a hyperbolic, pro-

motional tinge. As she deals with contemporary hot-shots, that tinge grows stronger. One misses the critical edge needed to demystify boredom-merchants like Rosemary Butcher and Richard Alston, and to put slick operators like DV8's Lloyd Newson - the Damien Hirst of dance - in their rightful place. When Siobhan Davies makes a work about "the rich set of feelings

that dancers get as they make a dance", Mackrell nods approvingly. She doesn't seem bothered that for many choreographers, process now counts for more than product.

"Subverting the bourgeois complexity between performer and audience" is the sort of bogusness dance-radicals love but - as Matthew Bourne's hit *Swan Lake* proved - that complexity has a

healthy way of reasserting itself. Mackrell is far too sane and intelligent not to welcome this return to the juiciness of music, story, and spectacle, but she still champions her campus gurus. For such people and their students, her book will be required reading. The rest of us may find in it - with its ruminations on partnering, scoring, staging, and filming - much food for thought.

# A brush with the intrepid fox

Justin Wintle hails the thinker who taught that disunity is strength

The Proper Study of Mankind: an anthology of essays by Isaiah Berlin, Chatto, £25

Sir Isaiah Berlin was an influence before I knew anything about him. At public school I was fortunate to be taught history by a Balliol man. "Right, you lot," he began one morning, "today you're going to imbibe Karl Marx."

Cue sharp intake of breath by twenty-odd privileged prats. For most of us, Harold Wilson was anathema enough. Marx meant the USSR which meant the Cuban missile crisis which meant having come within a hair's breadth of extinction at the hands of rabid ideologues. Had Mr Cozzens finally flipped?

But the lesson was no attempt at indoctrination. Rather we were introduced to Marx in the context of his times: an indomitable book-worm who offered fresh solutions to problems that had taxed Europe's finest minds. We were reminded of the central preoccupations of the Enlightenment, and given a purchase on Hegelian metaphysics. History was never the same again.

Cozzens knew his Isaiah Berlin. When later I read Berlin's monograph, I found it strangely familiar - and profoundly impressive. Published in 1939, *Karl Marx* is still in print (Fontana) and still the best introduction to its subject. Berlin may not especially like Marxian thought, but at the critical moments his exposition allows Marx to stand, even shine, in his own light.

This is typical of Berlin. His concern is nearly always with larger moral issues, but he never succumbs to indignation. Instead he labours diligently and eloquently at the rockface of other men's thought. *The Proper Study of Mankind* is testimony to these qualities, even though, as a sampler of Berlin, it fails to exhibit his full range. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer, editors of these 17 items, have a mission: to demonstrate that Berlin qualifies as a major thinker in his own right, that his work, which has saluted forth as essays and lectures, needs to be seen as a whole.

Are the claims substantiated? If not, then it is only because Berlin himself has outsmarted them. One of his bravura pieces is "The Hedgehog and the Fox" (1953), which takes as its starting point a fragment of Antilochus: "The fox knows many things but the hedgehog knows one big thing." Berlin applies this to the author of *War and Peace*.

Tolstoy is torn, he argues, between rival, and finally incompatible, positions. Foxes are free-floating empiricists. They respond to events as they occur. Hedge-

hogs are rationalists, committed to the myth that all phenomena are reducible to a single system. They insist all knowledge forms a seamless unity. As a novelist, Tolstoy is foxily alert to the moment. He regularly captures the fleeting and the ineffable. It is when he turns his attention to the theory of history that the hedgehog bristles into view. Human beings, he suggests, are never more than symptoms of great but unseen forces - fate!

Berlin's own cosmogony, peopled by European and Russian thinkers, abounds with both species, pluralists and monists. He sides with the pluralists. Monism, he asserts many times in these pages, is the stuff of authoritarianism; and as a Jew born in Latvia, who witnessed the Revolution in Moscow before his family emigrated, he has every reason to distrust any system. If Hegel was Marx's mentor, he also provided key strands of Nazism.

Berlin's outstanding contribution to political theory has been his espousal of "value pluralism". There is not (he advances), nor can there be, a true convergence of human values. Even in one culture, such values are innately rivalrous. Man is born to disagree. The business of politics is not to attempt to resolve all differences, but to accommodate a natural diversity.

In "Two Concepts of Liberty", Berlin orchestrates his philosophy with the notion of "negative liberty", insisting that freedom cannot be legislated. Only the removal of restraints can enable such a subjective affair.

Typically, it is communist, fascist and ultra-nationalist regimes that peddle "positive" liberty. What their ideologies share is the monist ideal. Since the ultimate source of this error is Socrates, Berlin in effect challenges the mainstream of western thought. Even so, it is difficult to conceive of Sir Isaiah in quite such radical terms. His lucid, polished discourse tempers his own theses so that his prose becomes a mosaic of the widest possible interplay of ideas. Yet such discourse is itself a form of overview, so that it becomes unclear whether Berlin is after all a fox.

Or perhaps he is a giraffe: an Oxford luminary observing other creatures at play? If not, then it is only because Berlin himself has outsmarted them. One of his bravura pieces is "The Hedgehog and the Fox" (1953), which takes as its starting point a fragment of Antilochus: "The fox knows many things but the hedgehog knows one big thing." Berlin applies this to the author of *War and Peace*.

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He is a giraffe: an Oxford luminary observing other creatures at play

# Prophet and loss account

David J Goldberg heckles the Chief Rabbi's suburban sermon

The Politics of Hope by Jonathan Sacks, Cape, £15.95

The temptation for clerics to add their two bits-worth in the political arena has a long, rarely happy history. Nothing daunted, the Orthodox Chief Rabbi has felt compelled to offer his diagnosis of the breakdown of contemporary society and the failure of Western liberal democracy. His book, he modestly tells us in its Preface, is "unique", and to be compared in its intent with Rousseau's *The Social Contract*.

Before considering whether Dr Sacks succeeds, it is worth asking what drove such a talented man to a project far removed from his usual sphere of concern. Two answers suggest themselves, neither particularly flattering. The first is that the chief rabbi has a Vicar of Bray propensity for attaching himself to whichever political doctrine is modish. In the early Eighties he was a robust Thatcherite; come the caring Nineties, he was converted to the politics of compassion; nowadays, he is the very epitome of non-ideological New Labour, espousing the latest fad of "communitarianism".

The second answer is about the prophet being without honour in his own community. The more his authority weakens within Anglo-Jewry, the more Dr Sacks is admired outside, especially by those

godless Fleet Street hacks who love to build up the bright Jewish boy with his Cambridge Double First at the expense of the hapless Archbishop of Canterbury. So why not offer your prescription for moral rejuvenation to a respectfully attentive non-Jewish audience?

*The Politics of Hope* is, appropriately, something of a curate's egg of a book. For a start, it is much too loud for its thesis, more an extended series of sermons than a developed argument, and like most sermons, it could usefully be cut in half; but Dr Sacks is in love with words. They pour from him in torrents, repetitive, reiterated, regurgitated. Presumably, his editor was too much in awe to staunch the flow.

Also, like most sermons, it relies more on impressionist generalisations than hard statistics. Time and again we are invited to view a Hogarthian landscape of muggings, drugs, dysfunctional families, divorce, depressive illness, suicide, abortion, illegitimacy and falling educational standards. There is something rotten in the state.

What caused it? It was the Enlightenment's fault, for failing to distinguish between liberalism and libertarianism. The book's central chapters, on the Liberal Revolution, the birth of the Individual, and Moral Language, are very good indeed. Dr Sacks writes with succinct clarity and insight about the ideas of Locke, Hume and Hobbes. He is less fair on Kant, and dismissive about A.J. Ayer's logical positivism or Sartre's existentialism, but understandably so, given that for him the notion of individual autonomy, overriding traditional morality and leading to relativism, was where the rot started.

Having exhaustively catalogued the ills of modern society, what are Dr Sacks's nostrums, his politics of hope? They are modest indeed. He wants to restore de Tocqueville's "voluntary associations", those local fraternities of congregations, schools and businesses which give people a stake in running their communities. A vision once guided us - "that we loosely call the Judeo-Christian tradition" - which emphasised the value of institutions

and to which all broadly subscribed, "poor and rich alike, miners, labourers, politicians... fellows of Oxbridge colleges and children in the village school." These "mediating structures" need to be revived. They promote three qualities which are mentioned time and time again: "civility", "gentility" and "graciousness". All very well, but let us not forget that, like Mr Major's nostalgia for warm beer and village cricket, such a rosy idealisation was predicated on strict hierarchy and class inequality.

The primacy of marriage, family and education must also be re-asserted. Dr Sacks writes movingly of family life, a testament to the warmth of his own. Essentially, though, his is a dream of cosy suburban domesticity, the aspirations of Jewish Finchley made manifest. He is particularly fond of using Regent's Park, with its elegant terraces, neatly laid-out gardens and public and private spaces, as a metaphor for the well-ordered civil society. He concedes that it might sound "middle-class, middle-aged and prosaic", but family and community are at the heart of his blueprint for the new social equation.

It was Kierkegaard who dubbed Isaac "the bourgeois patriarch", in contrast to his father Abraham, who had been a "knight of faith". On the evidence of this book, Dr Sacks is the bourgeois prophet of hope for our times, the religious counterpart - ponder it, dear reader - to Tony Blair.



Jonathan Sacks: 'Too loud'

Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday  
Saturday  
Sunday

A week in books

In late 1990, the Tory party treasurer Alistair McAlpine visited the not-yet-outed Margaret Thatcher "to tell her that Britain was beginning a serious recession". Just how did the art-dealing amateur politician and building-site heir know? Well, the weekly turnover from his "antiques and curiosity business" had dropped from £100,000 to a mere £2,000. Moreover, "I had also noticed how quiet London was". So much for econometric models and Treasury forecasters. Forget the dismal science: all a canny PM needs is some Mayfair Mr Potter who can stroll down Burlington Arcade and spot that trade seems a little flat today.

Political memoirs, of course, exist to service our curiosity about another kind of antique. Over the past few days, gleeful pundits have pored over the extracts from Lord McAlpine's effort, *Once a Jolly Begman* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20), in which the loyal Thatcherite pursues his grim vendetta against foes such as Norman Lamont, John Gummer, and the Premier himself - who used, he writes, to skulk invisibly around Chequers "pretending to be a pair of curtains". Having now read the entire volume, I can report that three-quarters of it boasts all the thrill of watching cement dry. Most of the

book consists of leisurely anecdotes from the building and painting trades, prefaced by a deluxe childhood that spices elements from Benjamin and Waugh. Fancy a riveting tale of the great day when the firm of McAlpine shifted "over 2,000 cubic yards of muck" on the Barbican site? Alistair's your man. "Being a builder can become immensely boring", he admits.

Even the missiles fired at Major's spineless "Cabinet of Chums" don't drop from a clear blue sky. It was a *New Statesman* interview in 1995 that first revealed McAlpine's hopes to see the Tories suffer "a good scrub with a hard brush". Compared to that image, his book's expectations of "a considerable defeat" sound a bit tame. Yet, in other moods, McAlpine has written about political intrigue with a shrewd ferocity. His modernised pastiche of Machiavelli, *The Servant*, dripped with a ruthless cunning that Old Niccolo himself might have admired. Alas, he's now gone down with the English memoir malaise: name those names (well, the dead ones at least); settle old scores; and then bore the readers rigid with a tour around your cultural Hinterland - in his case, the Australian Outback.

Strangely, for a resident of Italy, McAlpine has forfeited the fine Latin virtue of succinct abstraction in favour of the Anglo-Saxon taste for tedious yarns about the chaps he used to know. A world-class cynic has declined into the usual whingeing raconteur. That seems a shame - although I'd still like to know what happened after Eartha Kitt "elected to demonstrate gymnastics on the kitchen table".

Boyd Tonkin

## Paperbacks

By Boyd Tonkin

**Hitler's Willing Executioners** by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen (Abacus, £9.99) On Monday, the young Harvard historian Daniel Goldhagen will accept the rarely-awarded Democracy Prize in Bonn for this, the most contentious reinterpretation of Nazi war crimes in 30 years. To sum up a complex charge-sheet, he claims that ordinary German civilians and soldiers – conditioned by their bred-in-the-bone anti-Semitism – not only knew plenty about the unfolding Holocaust. They also took an eager part in execution-squads that killed almost as many as the death camps. Goldhagen's critics (who include Jewish historians) have riposted that he demonises all Germans just as the Nazis demonised all Jews. But the evidence proves compelling, and the passion of his argument flames off the page.

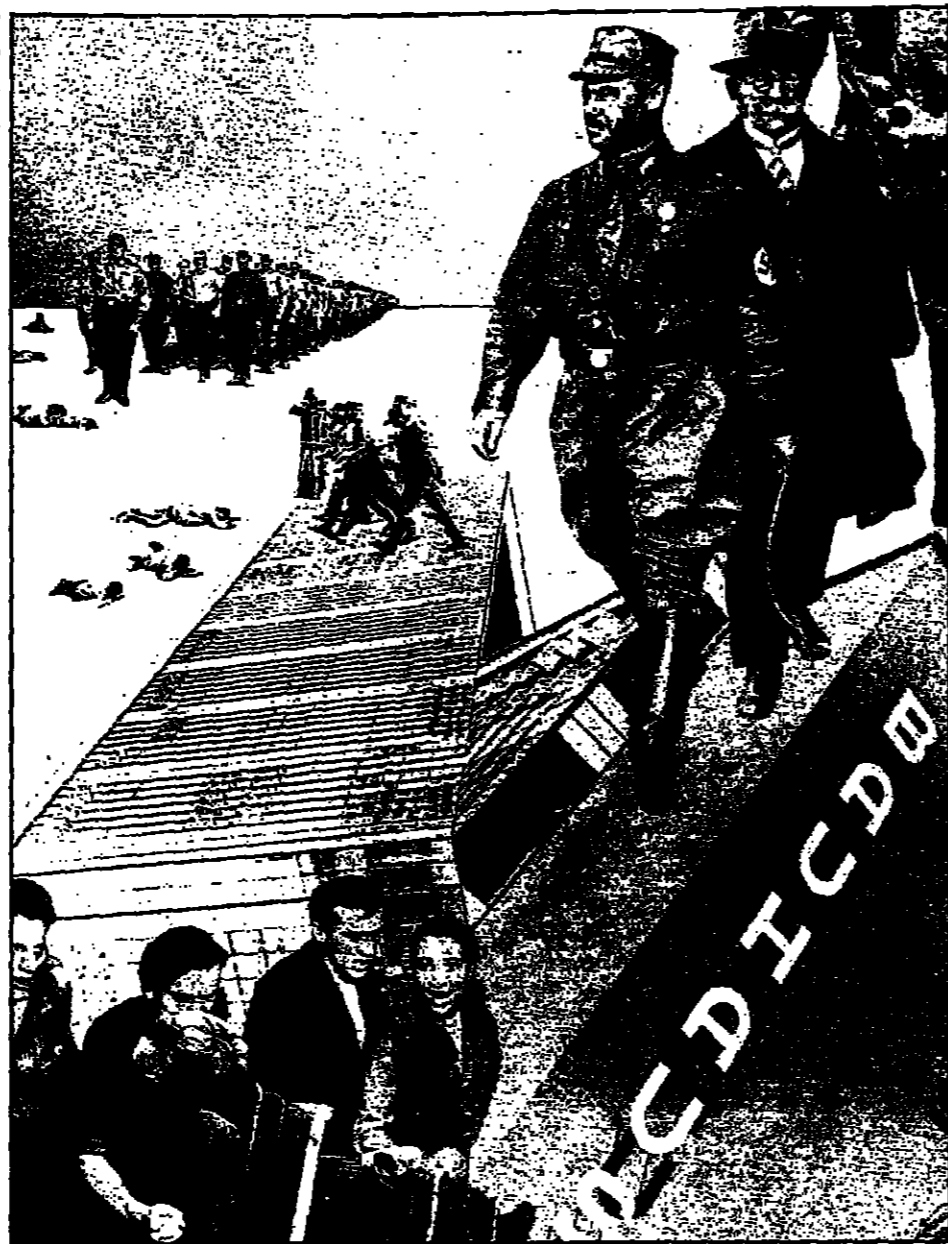
**The House Guest** by Barbara Anderson (Vintage, £6.99) Anderson's earlier novels and stories brought to mind a Kiwi Alan Bennett – pawky, sidelong glances at suburban New Zealand life with a slicing wit that cut through to the oddity under the chintz and tea-sets. *The House Guest* stages a more elaborate plot, with curious echoes of Henry James. A researcher arrives in NZ on the trail of a mysterious US women writer who settled there in silence. The unveiling of Alice O'Leary's secrets runs in parallel with discoveries about Robin, the scholar-sleuth. It sounds a standard plot – except that the fine comic detail of Anderson's writing lifts every paragraph. Alice, we learn, had "a quickness" about her – and so, in spades, does Anderson.

**The Debt to Pleasure** by John Lanchester (Picador, £5.99) Sometimes reviewing is a lonely trade. My brightest colleagues garlanded this debut novel, and its riddling *résumé* by a francophile foodie psychopath, with every superlative that the OED (or even Larousse) could supply. As for me, I ploughed wearily through a frigid unreliable-narrator exercise in the late-Nabokov manner, not much cheered by the fact that we never trust the crashing snob and bore (and killer) at its heart. I admired

the savoury prose; I relished the polyglot kitchen argot; I salivated on cue at the baroque recipes that nasty Tarquin Winot offers us. But when reviewers hauled in Dickens (Dickens!) as a comparison, I wondered just what kind of literary planet they (or I) inhabited.

**Love's Work** by Gillian Rose (Vintage, £5.99) How many books of the 1990s will still be read in half a century? If there's any justice in this world (and Gillian Rose's life and thought powerfully suggest the opposite), this one will be among them. A bold and original philosopher (who held a chair at Warwick University), Rose wrestled with the conflicts between her Jewish heritage, her Protestant cast of mind and the corrosive scepticism of so much modern thought. She died of ovarian cancer in December 1995. Not long before, she completed this brief (135 pages) but searing blend of memoir and essay. Its rapt accounts of sexual passion, religious faith, intellectual work – and life-threatening sickness – also manage many flashes of wry comedy and some striking character-sketches, from her enigmatic lover "Father Dr Patrick Gorman" to her old chum Camille Paglia. This is a book one yearns to know (in every sense) by heart.

**Faith Fox** by Jane Gardam (Abacus, £6.99) There has always been a blackly comic streak buried in Jane Gardam's novels and here it finds full and exuberant expression. Faith Fox is the Surrey-born infant daughter of Holly who dies in childbirth. Abandoned by her grieving family, she is driven north to spend the first few months of her life with her eccentric uncle Jack, his mad wife, Jocasta and assorted hangers-on (including a set of enraged Tibetan refugees and a housekeeper who can neither cook nor clean) in their religious retreat on the Northumberland Moors. On one level, Gardam's tale is a simple story of the great North/South divide – the geographical split that shuts off one end of Britain from the other, but it is also a story about love and redemption, sex and death recounted in dazzling style.



Images from 'Edles and Emigres: the flight of European artists from Hitler' by Stephanie Barron (Abrams, £25). Clockwise from left: two Yamawaki, 'The Blow against the Bauhaus'; Otto Klemperer with his children in 1935; Andreas Foininger's 'The Office Service Building, Fire Escapes and the El'; and John Heartfield's 'And Yet It Moves'



# The sinking ship of state

Alberto Manguel enjoys a stationary odyssey on the Brooklyn waterfront

**The Ordinary Seaman** is a contemporary odyssey – the chronicle of a voyage that will not take place, an adventure story that is all beginning and no end, an urban sea-yarn with no sea. The source, according to Goldman himself, was an item in the New York press, reporting that 17 Latin-American sailors, abandoned by their ship's authorities, had lived for months in a rat-infested, unheated hulk on the Brooklyn waterfront. Goldman interviewed the sailors: one gave him his own 12-page account of the ordeal, urging Goldman to make use of it. Ten years later, Goldman did.

**The Ordinary Seaman** by Francisco Goldman, Faber, £15.99

The result is a brilliantly imagined recreation of their sufferings set against a social atlas of contemporary America: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Cuba, Argentina and, of course, the United States. The sailors' stories unfold in backward glances and forward flashes so that every present moment wavers

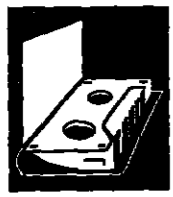
between regret and foreboding, brutal glimpses of the Sandinista war and dreams of a better life. One sailor, Bernardo, dies of a gangrenous leg; another, Esteban, escapes into the city where fate rewards him with a haircut and the love of a Mexican manicurist; others drag out their existences through theft, through erotic fantasies or by drugging themselves with kerosene fumes. No one can help these "ordinary seamen" move on but themselves: neither the Ship Visitor who takes professional pity on the stranded men, nor the Reverend Kathy Roundtree who has assumed the role of "the Port of New Jersey and New York's Father Brown", and certainly not the god-like and ambiguous Captain who professes more knowledge of herbal medicine than seafaring craft.

Nor will anyone avenge them. In our time, the guilty go unpunished. "Nowadays any scum can hide from God," says the Reverend Roundtree. "All you need is, whatever, a flag of convenience, brass plate incorporation." In this Odyssey gods and mortals, kings and enchantresses, Cyclops and Penelopes are small, inglorious, everyday creatures, neither less horrible nor less fate-bound than their illustrious predecessors. The most striking aspect of *The Ordinary Seaman* is its language, a baroque "Espanglés" coming into its own: "Ay no, muchacha, it hurts. It hurts just to remember that, just my hand touching your warm skin through a dress. A tightening in my throat, *va, pues*." Anyone who has spent any time in New York, Los Angeles or Miami will recognise (with either vivas of approval or shits, *manos of regret*) the rich, rhythmic prose of those Pan-American streets, which Goldman so deftly handles.

Memories, daydreams, visions of sex and death, descriptions of war, moments of half-magic and nightmares – all build up the waiting-time, fill the empty hull of the skeleton ship half in Spanish, half in English. It is true that other writers have made use of the doomed journey, notably B Traven in *The Death Ship*, Katherine Anne Porter in *Ship of Fools* and Julio Cortázar in *The Prizes*, but in these novels both the vessel and its voyagers seem too obviously and dogmatically symbolic. Goldman's ship is less imposing, its adventures (or lack of adventures) less literary. Precisely for that reason, the novel suggests other readings besides the mere tale of a drawn-out waiting. One is mythical: the story of how a society comes into being. Abandoned by the bosses who summoned them, transformed into outsiders, given neither permission to enter the city nor a purpose to leave it, the sailors are forced to form their own community, dream up their own history, create their own leaders and, of course, their own outsiders in a latino version of the settlement of America.

Another reading is political. *The Ordinary Seaman* can be read as a parable about the inability of the most powerful city in the most powerful country in the Western world to give a mission and a purpose to those washed up on her shores, to find for them a place in its national ambitions, to fulfil the promise engraved on its Statue of Liberty. In fact, it is almost without irony that the statue of the torch-bearing Lady becomes, for the sailors, an emblem of their own immobility in a forecast made by Bernardo, the one sailor who must in the end, like all prophets, die: "When that statue walks, *chavalos*, this ship will sail". The ship's ultimate fate (which mustn't be revealed) neither confirms nor denies Bernardo's prophecy.

## Audiobooks



Strange fey images and vibrant prose make Kate Atkinson's wonderful new novel *Human Croquet* (HarperCollins, 3hrs, £8.99) excellent listening, though Patricia Hodgson reads a shade too meaningfully and the story is less empathetic than *Behind The Scenes at the Museum*.

How would you cope if your 17-year-old daughter was kidnapped by a psychopath? Deborah Moggach's spine-chilling *Seesaw* (Reed, 3hrs, £8.99) is every parent's worst nightmare.

Josie Lawrence's compelling reading will keep you chewing your nails for every terrifying minute. Not scared enough? A dramatisation of Stephen King's *Pet Sematary* (BBC, 3hrs, £8.99) should see you right over the edge. Complete with gruesome groans and ominous traffic noises from the killer road that stimulates the vengeance of its ghoulish "deadfall" of pets – and people – this is not for the faint-hearted, or for bedtime.

Christina Hardyment

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## Independent choice: women and crime

By Mary Scott

Stewart Park is everybody's worst nightmare. His face is like a long, tapering wedge of Cheddar cheese. A single look sends mothers in the local playground scurrying to the police, turns a prostitute's eyes pale with fear. There will be people not sleeping well tonight because of him.

Stewart is also the narrator of *Freezing* by Penelope Evans (Black Swan, £6.99) and the most unusual and endearing fictional sleuth I have ever encountered. His world is that of London's underclass. He lives at home with his ancient, complaining Dad, who takes things to pieces to see how they work and who is gripped, serially, by mad enthusiasms – home security, fishing.

By day, Stewart is a photographer in a morgue. By night he fights, courtesy of his computer, alongside Dustraiser – who will save the Ice Maiden. Enter the real Ice Maiden, the corpse of a young girl pulled from the Thames. What follows is an extraordinary odyssey. Innocent, simple, ugly Stewart blunders along the trail of the anonymous dead girl and the pre-programmed Dustraiser develops a mind of his own.

Minor characters (and real treats) along the way include Lady, the pitbull with a heart of gold, Wayne Dodds, the chilling policeman with whom Stewart went to school, and Angie, the fat nurse who makes him realise that perhaps he isn't everyone's worst nightmare after all. But the best thing about this novel is the way it enters Stewart's mind and portrays the sophisticated world to which we are all accustomed as incomprehensible. It's utterly gripping, utterly convincing – a stunning achievement.

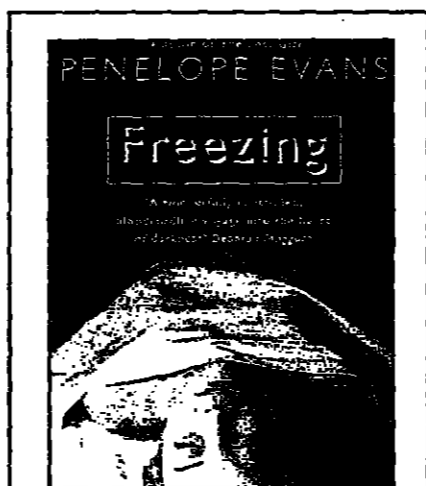
Jennifer Shute's *Sex Crimes* (Secker & Warburg, £9.99) has an intriguing narrator too. She's Christine Chandler, a 38-year-old, successful lawyer who

admits, from the start, she was responsible for a violent attack on her 26-year-old lover, Scott. The novel takes the form of a deposition to her lawyer. Snippets from the press – depicting her as the Boston Fury – intersperse her own, seemingly rational account. Scott pursued her, she insists, not the other way about. But gradually, as she continues – I defy you not to keep turning the pages – she reveals her madness. The achievement here is to admit us into the mind of a monster.

As in *Freezing*, Lesley Grant-Adamson's *The Girl in the Case* (Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99) has a dénouement that involves a dog. But Jay, the badly-behaved golden retriever belonging to the protagonist Mandy, is an unlikely saviour.

As unlikely as the rest of the plot: silly Mandy, an estate agent, allows herself to be lured to a remote cottage. Realising her predicament, she phones a colleague but doesn't suggest that the colleague calls the police. And when she stumbles on concrete evidence (an explicit video) of who has done the murders, she leaves it overnight – she is too tired, you understand – before informing the police of its existence. In the meantime, the tape is stolen by the resident kleptomaniac. I have always suspected that people who choose to bury themselves in the depths of the countryside (the novel is set in rural Oxfordshire) might be a couple of bricks short of a building set. My prejudices are confirmed.

Faint Praise by Ellen Hart (*The Women's Press*, £6.99) features dogs as well, though not as main characters. Restaurant owner Jane Lawless leaves her home, her aunt Beryl (and her dogs) to camp in a Minneapolis loft – a loft to die for. Wonderful interior decor; and wonderful dialogue. Who cares who did it (did what?), as long as the women keep



Pick of the week  
*Freezing* by Penelope Evans

on wisecracking? This is also a lesbian romance with the sexual action kept comfortably – for heterosexuals like me – off the page. Oh, and Jane cooks a mean dinner: try her recipe for chicken on page 51.

There are no dogs in *Hot Poppies* by Reggie Nadelson (Faber, £14.99). The poppies in question are mutant opium ones that have been irradiated by fallout from a secret Chernobyl-style explosion in China. Ingest them and you bleed from your ears. This is a gripping, hard-boiled whodunit which takes PI Artie Cohen to Hong Kong on the brink of its succession to China.

Artie's girlfriend wants to adopt a Chinese baby. Back in New York, illegal immigrants toil in sweatshops, in which "Fire Exit" is scrawled in red on a blank, whitewashed, brick wall. The inevitable happens; the place goes up in flames. Dante-esque scenes follow: doomed women cling, seven stories up, to a fire escape, then plunge to their death. Against all odds, Artie brings a Chinese baby back to his girlfriend – but not the baby she was expecting.

## A place in the sun

Paula Burnett on a new Caribbean classic

*Texaco* by Patrick Chamoiseau, translated by Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov, Granta, £15.99

*Texaco* won the Prix Goncourt (the French Booker) in 1992 and has already sold half a million copies in France. It has been translated into Japanese and Korean as well as nine other European languages. At long last, it has come out in English. What have we been missing?

For Milan Kundera, Chamoiseau "takes liberties with French which not one of his French contemporaries could even imagine taking". This big novel is volubly oral, its flow rapid, poetic and witty. It proceeds "by whirling paths...like driftwood riding the tide of memories".

Swampy would enjoy *Texaco*. So should the growing army of citizens who have stood up against business or officialdom on behalf of their communities. *Texaco* is a shantytown built on the oil company's disused depot between sea and mountain, between the country and the city of Port de France, capital of the Caribbean island of Martinique, Chamoiseau's home.

Its residents are "between" in another sense – creoles, people emerging from once separate cultural and racial histories. They defend their threatened community with everything from pitched battles to politics – including such tactics as sharing out the children so that each house has "big-

eyed blackids" to face down the officials. And they win. The town planner, felled by a stone in the opening pages, is transformed by the end into the residents' champion. He is changed by the old woman who mends his head and tells him the epic story of how the people came to be there, and why it matters that they remain, building not only homes but their sense of who they are.

Memory is their history, the map of their alleys like the map of the veins in their hands. Wipe that out in improvement projects, suggests Chamoiseau, and you destroy something irreplaceable.

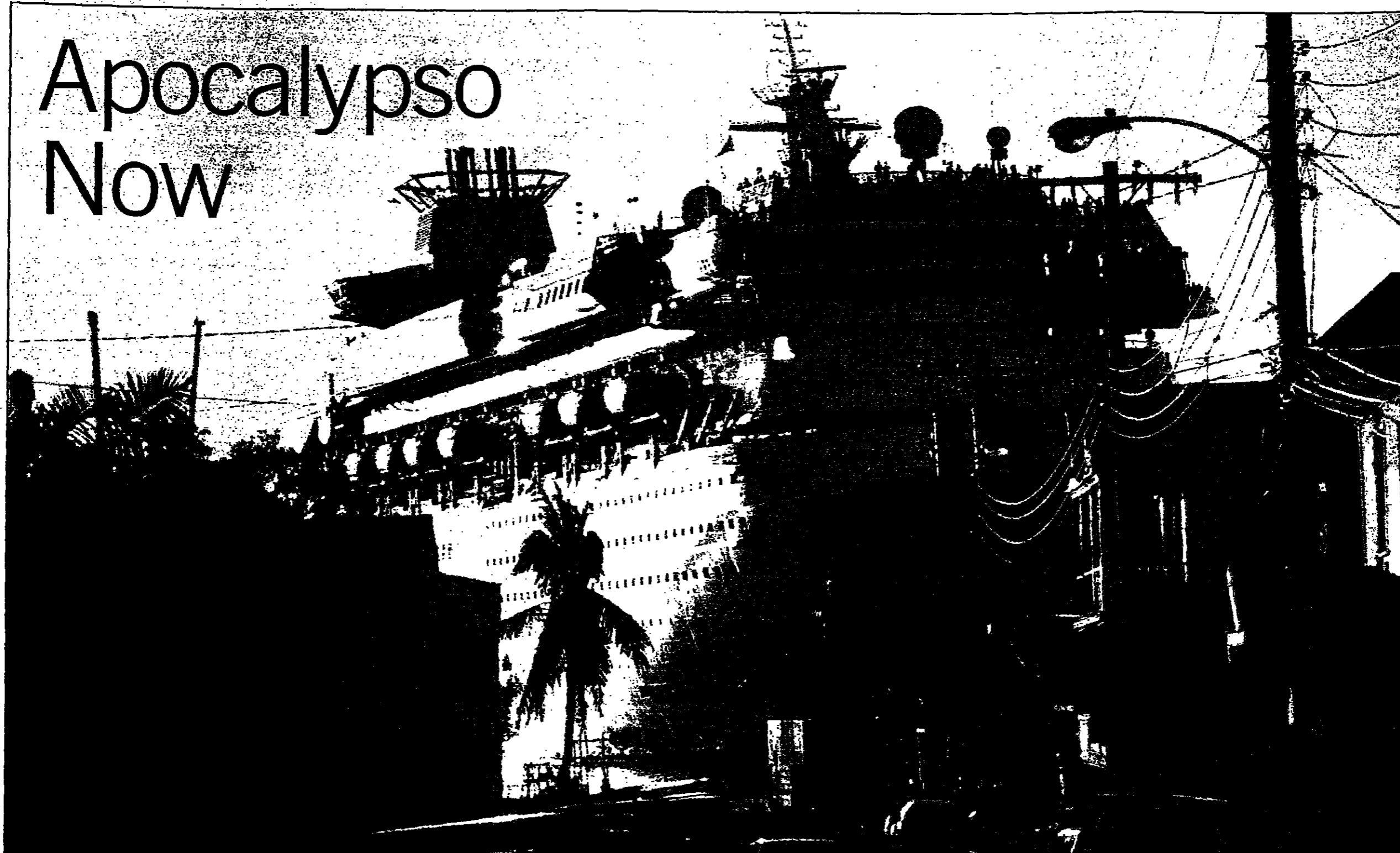
Like V S Naipaul's Caribbean classic *A House for Mr Biswas*, the book tells of the heroic struggle of the dispossessed to secure a place – but it is very different, with its rich tumble of stories spilling out just as the shanties spill down the hill. The old woman's voice that predominates chronicles the epochs by the building materials used by the poor: straw, crate-wood, asbestos, finally concrete. This is Chamoiseau's tribute to a lineage of unsung heroes with an "ancestral custom of survival", as in Derek Walcott's poetic epic *Omeros*. The final section tells of the author's gathering of oral histories from real people: of his sense of recording a vanishing past.

In 1989 Chamoiseau co-authored the manifesto *In Praise of Creoleness*. *Texaco* is Creole poetics in action. It contrasts "an accidental urban logic, all lined up, ordered, strong like the French language" with Creole's "open profusion". The Creole city, it says, speaks a new language and generates a new identity, multilingual and multiracial. The novel is in dialogue with Aimé Césaire, founder of the *négritude* movement. That Martinique is today an equal part of metropolitan France, and therefore the EU, is very much its mayor Césaire's doing. But Chamoiseau's generation wants independence. *Texaco* is seen as the last bastion of local identity, threatened by the encroaching French city. Translation has not been easy. Réjouis and Vinokurov have no Caribbean English, which has produced some anomalies. Why use the French spelling *mabi* when "mauby" is a familiar term in the anglophone Caribbean? The insistence on using "hutch" for cases (the shantytown dwellings) grates, as hutch conveys none of the pathos of makeshift home-making. But the standard English tone is accurate enough: most of the French is closer to standard than the Caribbean idiom developed by some writers in English. This exhilarating book is now available to a huge new readership. If only a fluent Creole and Caribbean English speaker had translated it – a St Lucian, for instance, Derek Walcott's language, which draws on both traditions, shows what could have been done.

# travel & outdoors

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## Apocalypso Now



Invasion of the culture snatchers: armadas of cruise ships ply the Caribbean disgorging thousands of tourists on streamlined day-trips

PHOTOGRAPH BY DU SORDET COLORIFIC

The craft steals through the calm of a Caribbean night as silently as a 4 x 100 watt loud-speaker system playing doo-wop and 'distorted salsa' allows. Fortunately, the vessel that we do not see is not the one that is to take us cruising for a week. In maritime parlance, it could most kindly be described as a tender, a launch bearing us across to the twinkling triangle on the horizon – appropriately named *MV Horizon*.

There is something endearingly British about the way that, each week, a boatload of holidaymakers is despatched upon the high seas to join a Caribbean cruise that is already in progress.

Here's the plan. Celebrity Cruises is a big Greek-American corporation. It sells space on its weekly cruise around the Eastern Caribbean to Britain's biggest tour operator, Thomson. The cruise begins each Saturday in San Juan on the island of Puerto Rico. Unfortunately Thomson's airline, Britannia, does not fly to San Juan. It does, however, fly on Sundays to Santo Domingo.

**Santo Domingo is a fine Spanish colonial capital, a kind of Havana-which-works!**

Everyone scrambles on to the more serious ship, each clutching a duty-free bag. Yet our cheap booze is pure contraband, breaking the ship rule that liquor may not be brought aboard. Thus the British stamp their national identity on an otherwise all-American mission.

You meet the rep, Julie – quite the jolliest person in the entire western hemisphere, let alone the Eastern Caribbean. You meet your cabin steward, whose beaming visage contains only the barest glimpse of disapproval at (a) the duty-free bag and (b) a slightly grubby bicycle.

You meet your room, a bottom-of-the-range-but-perfectly-serviceable "standard inside cabin" that is to perambulate you gently around the Caribbean for a week. And then you become vaguely aware that the ship has started to move, in the general direction of suspended reality.

There are a hundred reasons why cruising is bad for the world, such as the distress and disruption caused to a small island by offloading 1,000 people in the morning for a day-long frenzy of concentrated tourism, only for them to disappear at dusk leaving nothing but a few dollars and a few more dents in a fragile community.

But within five minutes of phoning room service and a fresh salad appearing for supper, and five seconds after illicitly sipping the finest Australian shiraz that Gatwick can sell, you drown out the anxieties by submerging yourself in a foaming bath of excess.

For the first 36 hours of the British ver-

sion of the cruise, there are none of those troublesome islands to visit. So you idly busy yourself about the ship, establishing routines to support you comfortably for a week. Foraging for sustenance is not among the challenges you face. From before dawn to beyond midnight you could happily pig out in half a dozen venues, then ring cabin service for extra supplies during the small hours. This will cost you not a single penny – or, in the on-board currency, a cent. *Horizon* most closely resembles an additional US state, drifting without undue purpose off Florida.

Seating for formal dining seems to be allocated by nationality, with British diners kept away from US citizens. So the ideal place to meet Americans is in the men's sauna (though possibly not if you are female). Unless you encounter a strangely reticent specimen, within five sweaty minutes of settling on the painfully piping-hot timbers, you will find out where he is from, how many times he has been divorced, how much he earns – and how much he paid for the cruise.

The one certainty in this torrent of information is that he will have paid more than you. Thomson has negotiated some entertainingly low prices for a five-star cruise. For the peak of high-season

departures, I paid £950. If you were to book the same trip from the Celebrity Cruises' British office, you could pay about half as much again. One benefit of booking direct, though, is that it takes care of the difference between American passengers and the British over tipping. For "difference" read "stinginess".

Celebrity, like many other cruise lines, prescribes the exact gratuity that each passenger should give to various crew members. The idea is to raise wages to a decent level. But the practice finds little favour among some Thomson passengers.

As *Horizon* sailed south of the Puerto Rico Trench, discontent was marked by an unseemly mutiny: the tip envelopes of some Brits were a good few notes short of the appropriate wad of dollars. For direct clients, Celebrity avoids financial embarrassment by issuing tipping vouchers in advance – removing the voluntary element from the equation.

Whatever the staff in the Starlight Restaurant earn from the British, they deserve double for unflagging good humour and service. The set piece each day is an elaborate dinner, such as is served in the kind of restaurant that would not normally have to cater for people like me. Another aspect that takes

some getting used to is that you share a table with the same diners every night. You have seven opportunities to become accustomed to the idea, by which time the *petits fours* have multiplied to *grands vins-huits* and you have not a snowflake-in-a-sauna's chance of sweating off the excess weight. Luckily I found the Knox family from Yorkshire unstintingly entertaining, though they might not say the same about me. Five stars for this family of five, then, but none for the official on-board entertainment: a dreary procession of sub-Broadway pastiches that would never have made it to Butlin's at Bognor Regis.

But unlike Butlin's, you can quickly escape to the deck to watch a full moon drench quicksilver upon a thousand islets in the mirrored sea. Ah yes, that's where we are – the Caribbean, threading through a necklace of islands which enjoy the possibly dubious and certainly temporary benefit of our company. Names skip enticingly from the pages of the brochure as if you were flicking through a stamp album: Antigua, Barbados, Martinique, Puerto Rico, St Thomas. And some people's view of the ports-of-call is as two-dimensional as a postage stamp. As far as the ship's excursions desk is concerned, the perfect passenger is expected to sign up for a minibus trip around the island, eat a mass-produced lunch and end up at a mass-produced souvenir shop.

Yet you can easily evade expectations. The charter airline will accept a bicycle for free. It stows neatly into your cabin without impeding the procession of room

service deliveries. You are now equipped for rapid transport around the ship (there may be a by-law prohibiting on-board cycling but I swear I never saw it). And with two wheels you are able to glide effortlessly around each island, taking stock of the scenery and providing modest entertainment for the local people – especially when hauling yourself wheezily up the little-known Barbados Alps. Take the cycle clips off on Martinique, the insufferably jolly French island with Himalayan tendencies; next day, pedal thankfully across Antigua's ample acres.

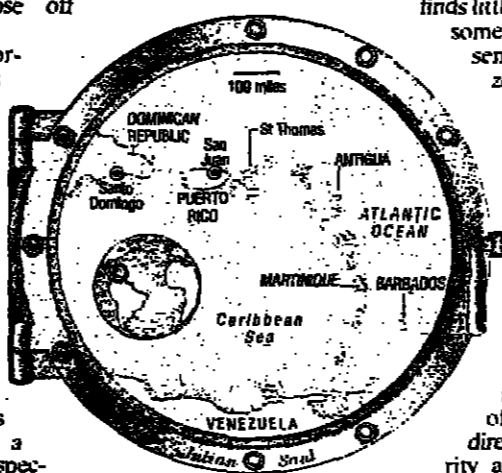
St Thomas is the saddest call: handsome Danish heritage swamped by a tidal wave of tawdry daytrippers. Conserve your calves for Puerto Rico, big and pretty enough to absorb its role as the Clapham Junction of the Caribbean cruise.

At the boisterous harbour in San Juan, you bid farewell to your sauna-soulmates – who miss out on the best treat of the whole voyage.

While Chuck and Hank fly back to the Midwestern snows, the British enjoy the longest stay of all: 16 hours in one of the minor gems of the Spanish Caribbean, inhabited by a raucously friendly bunch of people with apparently no business more pressing than to exchange beers with British boaters.

The final night leaves you in an unfamiliar position of seniority. To the new arrivals who boarded in Puerto Rico, you are an old shiphand, demonstrating your grasp of the ropes (and the sauna) to the newcomers. How curious your departure must appear to them the next morning when *Horizon* moors off the Dominican coast. A mobile juke box puffs across from the mainland to pick up that funny lot, still defiantly clutching their duty-free bags.

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# Praise be to Air Miles

Matthew Hoffman gives a guided tour through the heavenly vaults of Venice

In late 1993, I realised that I could collect Air Miles simply by paying bills with my bank-issued credit card. But where should I fly to, when I finally succeeded in garnering thousands of miles (which, at £20 per mile, would obviously be some time off)? Three years later, on a cold, misty winter afternoon, I peered through the unwashed glass of a *motoscafo* speeding through the Venetian lagoon. The campaniles of Venice were spread out to starboard like the skyscrapers of New York as seen from the New Jersey turnpike. It was mid-week, rather than a weekend, and I had booked three nights at an inexpensive pension just off the Grand Canal near the Accademia art gallery.

There was a problem, though. What can you do in such a treasure house as Venice in only three days? Or, more precisely, what can you do without? For me, the answer was determined by a summer holiday spent in nearby Vicenza in 1995. On that occasion, I had spent about 10 days touring the Veneto (Venice's historic mainland dependency) seeing as many as I could of the buildings of Andrea Palladio, the 16th-century Venetian architect. Now I decided to confine my sightseeing on this short trip to Palladio's two complete churches, San Giorgio Maggiore and Il Redentore – or at least to make them my first priority.

Of course, I had seen the exteriors of these churches before. Who hasn't? Anyone who has ever stood in front of the Doge's Palace, at the heart of tourist Venice, and looked across the lagoon, has noticed the classical portico of San Giorgio floating there, anchored to its little



View over the waterfront of the Giudecca to the profile of Palladio's Redentore  
Top: the play of light and space in Il Redentore and San Giorgio Maggiore  
MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: JONATHAN ANSTEE  
TOP PHOTOGRAPHS: MATTHEW HOFFMAN

island. And, turning to the right, along the waterfront of the Giudecca, with a little more discernment you may have picked out, from the line of smaller buildings, the compact, domed profile of Palladio's votive church dedicated to the Redeemer, in thanksgiving for deliverance from the plague of 1575-6. On this trip, however, I wouldn't merely gaze from afar.

Within an hour of getting to town, I had walked across the Dorsoduro from my hotel to the Zattere water-bus stop and caught a number 82 *vaporetto* to Redentore on the Giudecca; but it was already late afternoon, with sunset fast approaching. The church is lit by natural light and it was, to be frank, gloomy inside. It had a chaste magnificence but none of the delight of, say, one of Veronese's frescoed rooms in Palladio's Villa Maser. Of course, it was dedicated to a serious purpose: it's not a

nobleman's pleasure palace. But somehow I had not allowed for the difference. It was too dark to stay long, and I left for dinner a little disappointed.

The next day, after a morning spent among the glories of Venetian arts and crafts in the Museo Correr, I set out with trepidation for San Giorgio Maggiore. This time, though, I was delighted. Il Redentore may be made for spiritual reflection; San Giorgio is designed for show. The wealthy Benedictine monks must have wanted a church to rival the newly rebuilt St Peter's in Rome, for what they commissioned from Palladio is a magnificent showcase of High Renais-

sance grandeur. This is more Roman empire than Roman Catholic. Take the deep, U-shaped choir behind the chancel. Above the carved stalls there is an alternating series of windows and niches

something out of a Roman temple. Back in the main nave, through the aisles, into the apsidal arms of the transepts and under the high dome, there is a thrilling sense of spatial ordering. Architectural historians write of the rhythmic use of the intervals between bays, and repetitions and variations of motifs, as though the members of a

building were like notes of a composition. That analogy had always seemed strained to me, but Palladio's compressions of pilasters and of capitals, seemingly overlapping as they turn the corners from the nave to the crossing to the chancel, are surely music frozen in space. The next day in Venice I

devoted to other matters, but on my last morning I set out early – more from a sense of duty than desire – to take a last look at Il Redentore. The Giudecca Canal was shrouded in fog and the church loomed up before me as I approached it from the *vaporetto* stop. I plunged on inside and found myself alone but for a cleaning woman. The contrast in upkeep with San Giorgio was immediately apparent. The latter church is now looked after by the well-endowed Cini Foundation, and the stucco of the walls is smooth, the paintwork fresh. Il Redentore has peeling plaster and discoloured surfaces; the Franciscans seem to have remained as poor as their founder. All Palladio's buildings pay great attention to tonal values: they look ill when shabby, although they bounce back to life with a little repair work.

Still, the mild, diffuse early morning light was a great improvement on that of late afternoon, and as I lingered in the church, the fog burnt off and shafts of rosy light filtered through the plain glass thermal windows. I took a few photographs, and then decided to sketch a couple of bays in the nave. That made all the difference. A few scratchy pencil marks revealed to me the arrangement of small and large classical orders, and the subtle interplay that linked them. Il Redentore reveals its secrets much more reluctantly than San Giorgio, but it is worth the wait and the effort to penetrate them.

Much of the church is cordoned off and only the nave is open to the public. But the cleaner left one of the side-chapel gates open, and from the change in angle of vision there my understanding of the building gained a new dimension. A priest then emerged, and, with his permission, I was able to explore more of the church: to walk under the dome, into the apses, around the altar.

In the book *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura*, Palladio echoes his ancient Roman predecessor Vitruvius in pointing out that each building must be appropriate to its purpose. "Temples in particular," Palladio tells us, "ought to be so made, that they might have so much beauty, that nothing more beautiful could be imagined, and so disposed in each of their parts, that those who enter there, may be astonished, and remain in a kind of ecstasy in admiring their grace and beauty."

I can attest that this ecstasy is available, in very different forms, to those who will take the time to experience it, at both of Palladio's great Venetian churches.

**Palladio's compressions of pilasters and capitals, seemingly overlapping as they turn corners, are surely music frozen in space**

for standing sculptures, each element separated by an order of Corinthian half-columns surrounded by pediments and linked by a wide, sculpted moulding. A broad, classical cornice crowns the whole ensemble. Though the niches contain what are no doubt meant to be saints, the overall effect is like

building were like notes of a composition. That analogy had always seemed strained to me, but Palladio's compressions of pilasters and of capitals, seemingly overlapping as they turn the corners from the nave to the crossing to the chancel, are surely music frozen in space.

The next day in Venice I

## Chaucer revisited: the priest's tale

This is the year for travelling religiously, writes the Reverend Katharine Ruwens

I met cathedrals early in life, and at a young age began to get the hang of them and to grow to love them. The secret is to be brought up in Salisbury, a city dominated by the 404ft spire of its magnificent cathedral. Inside the vast nave we learnt childhood accommodation of adult habits on a grand scale: services observed at waist height, and everything being loud and out of reach – the music, the marble pillars, the prayers.

Fortune has thus been kind in providing me with an acute sense of belonging to England's heroic religious heritage. This year, happily, tourists get a chance to share in it, as a result of a coincidence of anniversaries.

It is a good thing that St Augustine chose not to mess with Pope Gregory the Great. He and his monks had travelled as far as Gaul. Weary, they wanted to be released from their obligation and return to Rome: after having been "encouraged by letters from Gregory", Augustine landed in Kent in 597 to begin reconversion to Christianity. (The Romans first brought Christianity to England, but under the Anglo-Saxons the country had reverted to paganism.) Hence 1997 is a year of celebration, marking the 1,400th anniversary of his arrival, and an equal commemoration of the death of St Columba on Iona. St Columba didn't have a particularly easy journey of it,



The ruin route: Whithy Abbey

either, on his route from Ireland, what with recalcitrant monks and shipwrecks.

English Heritage has designated this year a time of celebration of the country's Christian traditions. We are invited to follow in the footsteps of the early Christian fathers – along the way meeting some mothers too, among them Queen Bertha and St Hilda. Special events around the country include an exhibition of medieval imagery at the Bar Convent Museum in York, and the making demonstrations at Cleeve Abbey in Somerset. The highlight of English Heritage's year is on 25 May, when the Archbishop of Canterbury

opens a £1m museum amid the remains of St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury. Over the next six months, the holi-est of English cities will host exhibitions of paintings and photographs and a display of relics of St Thomas Becket, including the Becket chalice, or chalice, acquired by the V&A last year. The Dean of Canterbury is not anticipating miracles. He is, however, expecting much toing and froing, and even more visitors than usual, when the pilgrimage season gets under way.

As Chaucer's pilgrims got the urge to go on pilgrimage in April, "when the sweet showers fall", so, too, will the chapter and choir from Canterbury Cathedral set off for Rome in April. There they will sing, and share in worship at holy places – San Gregorio al Celio and Santa Maria Maggiore. They are not the staff-and-cockleshell variety of pilgrim, as they are travelling there by the fastest means available, on a scheduled flight from Heathrow.

Shortly afterwards, a group of 50 will reverse the itinerary, and a handful of walkers will be among them when they start from Rome on 18 May. They are travelling through Italy and France and will be joined by a further 400 pilgrims when they reach Canterbury Cathedral on 26 May, the feast day of St Augustine.

The massed ranks of pilgrims then take four routes to Derry in Ireland, to arrive on 9 June. The journey's end is the city

founded by St Columba, today seen as a place of reconciliation. The route will take the pilgrims through great cities and places of urban and industrial deprivation, as well as some conventional places of pilgrimage, such as Whithy Abbey (left) and Lindisfarne Priory. This pilgrimage is not seen as an exercise in nostalgia, but as a re-reading of the Christian faith through cities and suburbs where the main religion is not necessarily Christianity – such as Leicester, with its large Hindu and Muslim communities.

We live in days of high speed travel, and in many ways barely skim the surface of our world. In making 1997 a year of pilgrimage, Britain's Christians of the four nations hope to make present generations more conscious of the faith and the way in which Christianity has formed us and our world.

The writer is priest at St John's in Waterloo, London.

Bar Convent, York (01904 643238): medieval imagery 7 April-7 September. Cleeve Abbey, Somerset (01984 640377 01823 272033): tile-making and storytelling, 20-26 September. Whithy Abbey (01947 603568), open 10am-6pm, 22 March to 31 October, 10am-4pm from 1 November. Lindisfarne Priory (01289 389200): access only at low tide, across causeway. English Heritage Souvenir Map 1997, available free by calling 0171-973 3434.

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## The spirit of the Mayans is alive and well in Chiapas. By Matthew Wells

The glorious ruined temples of Palenque and Uxmal are far grander monuments to what the Mayan civilisation once was. Here, though, surrounded by the humbled descendants of the Mayans, you get an understanding of the fervour that caused such places to be created. You also comprehend the collective belief in the campaign for self-determination, which manifests itself in support for the Zapatistas in the face of repression and human rights abuses such as those reported this week from the sad state of Chiapas.



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## Italy

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# Blowing hot and cold

Stephen Wood left New York and hit the slopes of New England

New England has the most peculiar climate. I knew what it could do to autumn leaves, but I had no idea that it could turn skiers red, white and blue. While I was packing for my trip to Killington, Vermont, a colleague holidaying in the nearby resort of Stowe was already experiencing the local winter fevers, shivers alternating with sweats. I had telephoned her. I would have known to pack an extra pair of gloves, a couple of short-sleeved T-shirts, all my thermal underwear and an umbrella. Luckily, I only went for the weekend.

It was a brief item in US *Ski* magazine that had given me the idea. A new ski-train service, it said, had started running this season from New York's Penn Station to Rutland in Vermont. The rock-bottom prices for winter transatlantic flights made the idea feasible. For £159 return I could hang out with my friend Leslie in New York, add another \$100 for the round trip on the Ethan Allen Express ski-train, and I could have a couple of days' skiing at Killington, the biggest resort on the US East Coast. The weekend before last, I put the idea into practice.

Amtrak's offices in London had never heard of the Ethan Allen Express; a helpful woman at Penn Station gave me some departure times over the phone, but they weren't for the right train; if I had noticed that my map of New England did not show a railway line to Rutland, I probably would have given up. But thanks to Leslie I got to the station at the right time, picked up the ticket she had booked, and joined 50-odd other skiers squeezing on to the train among a crowd of late-afternoon commuters heading for up-state New York.

I know why the train is called Ethan Allen: it celebrates the leader of the insurrectionist Green Mountain Boys, who fought for and created the state of Vermont in 1777. But an average speed of 48 miles per hour on the five-hour trip is no reason to call it an express. Still, it's a lot better than nothing, which is what Rutland used to have: the town had been waiting 45 years for a passenger service when the first Ethan Allen Express arrived in a parking lot last December (Rutland's railway station will arrive later this year).

It had been pleasantly warm in New York, almost T-shirt temperature. But at night in Killington the weather was positively barny.

I stepped off the bus from Rutland on to soft mud, and in my lodgings fell asleep listening to water pouring off the hillside. The next morning, with the temperature pushing 60F, I felt as incongruous in skiwear as those Christmas Day weirdos in their swimming trunks – and after a few



From T-shirts to full thermals in rapid succession: in Killington the weather is positively barny

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN VUOS

minutes' walk to the ski lifts I was just as wet, and much hotter and redder in the face. Not only did it feel like Wales in mid-May, it looked like it, too, apart from the well-groomed slush covering the swaths cut through the trees. Killington's topography is hilly rather than dramatic, its highest point, Killington Peak, reaches only 1300m.

But it was a good morning. You know that feeling when you've really cracked the skiing thing? I had it. Killington's most difficult double-diamond black runs were no problem; on the tricky mogul fields I picked my way past those less skilled than myself lying in the slush. It was only on Killington Peak's Downdraft piste that the doubts set in. At the top I read a government health warning, a signpost announcing that only experienced skiers should proceed, and only "with equipment in good condition"; but at the bottom I had a troubling feeling that the run only seemed easy because it was – a disappointment confirmed by another British skier, who agreed that Killington's pistes are not nearly as black as they are painted.

For the East Coast's biggest resort, Killington is surprisingly small. Thanks also to the efficient lift system (and the supremely efficient queuing system – it's no wonder the British love skiing in the USA), you can cover almost the whole area in a day. I would have managed that, but for the electric storm. I had already been queuing for 15 minutes to get back up to Killington Peak after lunch when the whole system ground to a halt. A large, bearded resort employee bellowed that state law required the lifts to be stopped in these conditions, on the grounds that we could be "fried". For the next

half-an-hour we stood in pouring rain until state law took pity on us. Soaked through, I felt cold for the first time in Killington on the endless run (a vertical of almost 1000m) down to the Skyscraper lift base.

Cold? That was nothing. Next morning, the temperature had dropped by more than 30F: the hills were covered with ice, and the wind was piercing. Despite the bright sunlight it was a full-thermals, four-glove day; and the skiing was no fun. So I climbed into a warm car and was driven to the New England Ski Museum at Franconia, New Hampshire. This gave the lie to the notion that in the USA things are bigger and better: in a smallish shed, it offered a good video, a disappointing collection of ski fashion through the ages, and an usual collection of wooden skis – including one with a point at both ends, to be turned

around in the event of a breakage. The only real treat was the collection of beautiful, plain-black 1960s Head skis, for which I would almost give up my beloved K2 Twos.

The next morning was bitterly cold again; but the full force of Killington's awesome snow-making capability had been turned on the slopes, and by now the ice was covered. I had a wonderful couple of hours sweeping down the almost deserted pistes, leaning right over to push the K2 Twos into a carve... perhaps my skiing has improved after all. Then it was back to the Ethan Allen Express, waiting in the parking lot at Rutland, for five-hours-worth of beautiful sunlit views of New York State, followed by another happy day tramping the streets of Manhattan.

Further reports on skiing in the States in tomorrow's *Independent on Sunday*.

This week, Virginia Bottomley has told me lots about travel. It is encouraging that politicians are at last taking the industry seriously, but I find some of her comments curious. On Wednesday, the Department of National Heritage sent out a press release boasting of record earnings from foreign visitors to Britain. One reason, claimed the heritage secretary, was the Lottery's generous award of "£11.9 billion to expand the National Portrait Gallery".

A quick calculation shows that £12bn would buy an awful lot of stolen Picassos, and would indeed help to "ensure London's continued and universal appeal". But the amount that the National Lottery actually promised to give the gallery was a more modest £11.9m.

Misprints are easier to forgive than misrepresentations. The thrust of the press release is that more overseas visitors are coming to Britain, and that they are spending more. But when you get the raw data from the Office for National Statistics, you discover something odd: that while the total number of visitors is at an all-time record, the average individual is actually spending less. In 1995 a typical tourist spent £503 in Britain; by last year the mean spend had fallen to £487.

Worse still for the UK economy, the travel deficit is accelerating alarmingly: we spend much more abroad than we earn from tourism, and the gap is widening. Every day in 1995, British tourists spent £10m more abroad than we earned. Last year that figure rose by 11 per cent. While we splash out on foreign travel, inbound visitors are inclined to spend less.

Why could this be? Another misfire I received this week suggested that there is "a fundamental threat to every tourist business up and down the country". Before reading the rest of the press release, I pondered some possible causes for a continuing decline in visitor spend.

Just a couple of plausible candidates from yesterday's headlines: the prospect of a long, unhappy train journey from the capital to Windsor or Winchester, because of the wholesale cancellation of non-commuter services by South West Trains. Or



Simon Calder

the postponement by a year of the completion of the Jubilee Line, the construction of which around Westminster has wrecked every tourist's photographs of Big Ben over the past three years.

No: the real threat, it turns out, is Labour's "tourist tax". The despatch is another one from Mrs Bottomley, writing this time from Conservative Central Office.

In a speech to Britain's hoteliers in London, she explained that she is not referring to an actual tax (unlike, for example, Air Passenger Duty which is set to double in November; this will be a £20 levy on every non-EU tourist leaving the country by air). In fact, Mrs Bottomley is referring to "Labour's slavish ideological support for the European Social Chapter and Minimum Wage", which will "cost one million jobs". So now you know.

No one in the travel industry was especially surprised when Sunvil Holidays was voted one of Britain's best tour operators by readers of *Which?* magazine. The company runs high-quality holidays to diverse destinations, including Crete and Costa Rica. But Sunvil's managing director, Noel Josephides, is surprising plenty of people with his pronouncements on staff and customers.

Mr Josephides has a weekly column in the travel trade newspaper *Travel Week*. His views, always stimulating, are sometimes downright controversial. Last year he surprised an industry in which a high proportion of employees are female by saying that companies should have the right to sack workers who become pregnant.

Now his target is the travelling public. In a story about the marketing tactics employed by large tour operators, he writes: "Don't forget, the public is not very bright."



## something to declare

### A likely story

"The second-longest reef in the world" – guide books and tourist office hand-outs for Belize

As diving becomes more popular, the size of a nation's offshore growth of coral skeletons has become an instrument for attracting tourists. No one disputes Australia's claim for the longest reef, the 1,600-mile Great Barrier. Now Belize, whose coast is decorated with a strip 150 miles long, is much closer to these shores than is Australia. But before you dive for your mask, you should know that Belize is beaten by three others: New

Caledonia's Southwest Barrier (380 miles) and Northwest Barrier (340 miles), plus the Great Sea Reef in Fiji (155 miles). Belize, however, does have the longest coral reef in the Northern Hemisphere. This information came from David Stanley's *South Pacific Handbook* (Moon, £14.95), which rubs in the South's ascendancy by noting, "Over 600 species of coral make their home in the Pacific, compared to only 48 in the Caribbean."

## Trouble spots

Antisocial practices around the world

Sweden: "Like other cold and sparsely populated countries, Sweden faces serious concerns about alcoholism. An estimated 300,000 of the country's 8.5 million people drink so consistently that their health is in danger, according to the Swedish Institute. Strollers in Stockholm's squares on Saturday mornings dodge pools of vomit left by Friday night's carousing crowds." – AP  
Australia: "The most popular pastime in Australia is giving other people a hard time. If there are no Poms around, they resort to picking on each other. It's just the way they are, bless 'em." – TNT  
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see with a 35p stamp to TNT Travel Planner, 14-15 Child's Place, London SW5 9RX.  
Saudi Arabia: "Anyone involved in a commercial dispute with a Saudi company or individual may be prevented from leaving the country pending resolution of the dispute." – Foreign Office Travel Advice Unit (0171-238 4503)  
Lebanon: "Last Tuesday, an irate driver opened fire on a bus carrying Japanese tourists in eastern Lebanon, sending at least one bullet through the rear window of the bus. No injuries were reported. Susan Abed, a guide on the bus, said the shooting was the result of a dispute over the right of passage" on the road. – AP

## Visitors' book

Himalayan Mountain Institute, Darjeeling, India

You have a wonderful museum here, but please get a grip of it. The maintenance is poor, there have been no entries in the lists of climbers since 1993 and the souvenir shop is a disgrace – Colonel R. Jukes-Hughes, *Shropshire*

You should have recorded the first British woman to climb Everest, Rebecca Stephens. Otherwise a very good, characterful museum – James B. Ryle, *Kent*

Deeply moved, inspired and amazed – Carolyn Newman, *Canberra*

## True or false

You need at least a week to travel by land between Panama and Colombia

False. Although maps show the Pan-American Highway melting into the jungle of Darien in eastern Panama, 30 difficult miles from the Colombian frontier, the new edition of *South America on a Shoestring* (Lonely Planet, £17.99) describes some alternatives for the traveller who prefers not to spend days cutting through rainforest infested with

n'er-do-wells: "The jungle route is getting more dangerous every year, and foreign travellers are definitely advised to get a guide... An unaccompanied foreigner may be assumed to be either a drug trafficker or a US Drug Enforcement Agency operative." Instead, you could fly from Panama City to Puerto Obaldia on the Atlantic coast

(fare £25), whence it is a four-hour walk along the shore to the Colombian village of Capurgana. From here you can fly to the city of Medellin in about an hour for about £30. With luck you can cover the whole Panama City-to-Medellin distance between dawn and dusk – and spend the next year dining out on the day you walked the Darien.

## Bargain of the week

Or should that be "Bargain of the Year"? From this morning, British Airways and Qantas are selling flights to Australia at an absurdly low fare, given all the stopover possibilities. The deal is on offer for travelling out in April May or June, and returning by the end of July. To Brisbane, Cairns,

Melbourne or Sydney, you pay £699 plus tax – a fairly typical low-season fare for quality airlines. But in an act of spectacular generosity, the two airlines are offering stopovers in Africa or north east Asia. The choice on the outbound leg is between Bangkok or Singapore, but on the way back

you get to choose from Osaka, Peking, Seoul or Tokyo in Asia; in Africa, the Zimbabwean capital Harare or Johannesburg in South Africa. You can book through any agent, or either airline: the fastest response yesterday was from Qantas on 0345 747767. Bookings must be made by 8 April.

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## Are we nearly there?

Windy days out for kids

**National Mills Day** There are about 400 mills across the country that are open to the public, a fact celebrated on 11 May, when our industrial heritage sets its sails for a day of activities, many geared especially for children. Some mills will offer free or reduced price entry for the day. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (0171-377 1644) publishes *Mills Open*, which gives details of all mills known to be open to the public.

**Wimbledon Windmill Museum**, Windmill Road, Wimbledon Common (0181-947 2825) This was the site of many duels in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Common's unusual hollow post mill, built in 1817, forms the main attraction, along with a collection of milling equipment to show how the mill would have worked and models depicting the history of windmills. Most of the equipment is robust and child-proof and kids are encouraged to try their hand at the grinding process. Open Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, April to October, 2pm-5pm. Adults £1, children and concessions 50p.

**Coldharbour Mill, Uffculme**, Cullompton, Devon EX15 3EE (01884 840960) If you don't know the difference between bobbins and a "Pollit and Wigzell drop-valve horizontal cross compound steam engine" this working wool mill and museum can provide answers. From lamb to pullover, the whole process is on display, with tours explaining the machines in action and the life of its 19th-century workers. Open April to October, 10.30am to 5pm daily. Adults £5, children £2.50, family £13.50.

**Skidby Windmill**, just south of Beverley on the A164, East Yorkshire (01482 884971) A working mill with milling on Sundays. Easter at Skidby on 30 March includes a painted-egg competition and free face-painting. The mill is holding a fund-raising fare on 23 March. Open weekends, 10am-4pm. Adults £1.50, children 50p, concessions 80p.

**Delabole Wind Farm, Delabole**, North Cornwall, PL33 9BZ (01840 213377) Ten wind turbines stationed here provide "green" power for 3,000 households. The visitor's centre explains how—and looks at other renewable sources with the help of working models. Call for opening times.

**Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagans**, Cardiff CF5 6XR (01222 569441) Wales used to be home to hundreds of corn mills, driven—as this one is—by water. Three floors of grinding and lifting machinery turn grain into feed under the miller's supervision. Open Easter to October, 10am to 6pm. Adult £5, children £3.75, concessions £3.75.

**Tormiston Mill**, nine miles west of Kirkwall (A965), Orkney. Sympathetically converted to include a craft shop, visitor's centre and restaurant. Although no longer working it has retained most of the original machinery and waterwheel. Open from April, Mon to Sat, 9.30am to 6.30pm, Sunday 2-4.30pm.

# Flour of a scientific heritage

Caroline Millar saw the sails go round at Green's Mill, Nottingham

**G**reen's Mill stands picturesquely silhouetted against the white sky of early spring. Children scream and point excitedly to the vast sails gathering speed in a winter breeze. Inside, there is a noise like a vast treadle sewing-machine as the millstones grind impressively into action.

Yet the Mill is not just a nostalgic souvenir of our rural past. Situated in the heart of industrial Nottingham, it also tells the story of George Green, one of the greatest scientists of the 19th century.

This mathematician and miller inherited the mill from his father, who had built it overlooking the valley of the river Trent in 1807. George, a largely self-educated man, played his part in the business. He also pioneered the application of mathematics to natural phenomena such as electricity and magnetism. Although he was virtually unknown during his lifetime, his work is now used in all the physical sciences.

Kids may scoot past the section of the museum that deals with Green's life. What they will dawdle over is a hands-on science section where Green's interests are illustrated by wave machines, echo tubes, and illusions such as the "ghostly hands". You can even get a rather lurid throwback to Sixties Op Art by looking through the prism towards the moving sails of the mill.

Outside, the sturdy brick buildings have a practical beauty. And, the nearest thing to heaven for the under-10s, an extra-long slide snakes its way down the hill.

**The visitors** Caroline Millar, a freelance writer, went to Green's Mill with her son Thomas, seven, daughter Claire, four, and niece Emma Atamanuk, eight.

**Caroline:** We all felt quite awed by all those vast wheels turning in the mill. You can't help saying to yourself, "how amazing, it really works," when you see the bags of flour at the end of it all.

It was quite an adventure to climb to the top, and see Nottingham spread out in front of us. The stairs were very steep, though, and I wouldn't want to take a child under four up there.

I found the historical details fascinating. You realise how recent our urban landscapes are when you see a reminder of an older way of life still standing, like the mill.

Emma and Thomas preferred the hands-on science, and learnt quite a lot from seeing Green's Mill in action. But I don't think the mill is ideal for younger children. At four, Claire got very



Not just a nostalgic souvenir of the rural past: Green's Mill tells a story of scientific achievement

PHOTOGRAPH ANDREW BURMAN

bored, and verged on a tantrum when she couldn't buy a badge.

**Emma:** I liked it because it was interesting when you could see all the big wheels going round. You could see the sails going past the window and I think the wind must be very strong to push heavy things like that. In the science part I liked the ball with all the pink lines that go to your hand—it looked like lightning striking my

hand. But the video in the museum was a bit boring. I loved the big slide. It was more slippery when you went on your coat and put your feet in the air. Thomas looked funny when he was doing that.

**Thomas:** Actually, none of it was boring. I liked to see the big wheels turning. They were going round very quick and it must have been a hard wind. But the steps up to the top of the mill

were steep and when I had to go down I had to go backwards.

There was a round thing and when you put your hand in, it was reflected like a ghostly hand. I kept trying to shake it but it kept moving away.

The slide was dead big. Emma thought I looked funny, but I don't.

**Claire:** I liked the playground and the windmill because it could go round. I liked the bit that the

water goes in [the wave machine]. But I cried because I wanted to buy something.

**The deal** Green's Mill and Science Centre is at Windmill Lane, Sneinton, Nottingham NG2 4QB (0115 915 6878). Opening times: Wednesday-Sunday (and Bank Holiday Mondays) 10am-5pm.

**Entrance:** Free—but visitors are urged to buy a bag of Green's Mill flour.

**Access:** Telephone for details of special disabled access (to the museum only, not the mill). Buggy-pushers may find the steps up to the museum a problem.

**Toilets:** Clean. There are toilets for the disabled.

**Catering:** There is a café, run by volunteers. On the day we went it wasn't open, and the nearest café was in the city centre.

**Education:** Lots. Ring the mill for details of sessions on bread-making, corn dollies and wind power.

## The mystery appeal of the dreaming spires

On the trail of Inspector Morse: Rhiannon Batten investigates Oxford

**A**pparently one particular room in Oxford's Randolph Hotel is invariably booked up by Americans these days. The reason for the popularity of room 310 is that a certain occupant recently died in it. Fortunately for the visiting Americans, this was not to do with any health or safety problems the room might have had. The doomed lady

was not even alive, as such, in the first place. She was a friend of Colla Dexter's jottings. As his fans will know, he is the writer behind the *Inspector Morse* programmes. The series has become so popular around the world that many tourists now visit Oxford specifically to try to seek out Morse's sleuthing grounds.

To cater for this massive interest, the local tourist information centre has just set up an official walking tour especially for all the *Inspector Morse* location-spoilers. Taking in colleges, museums, pubs and gardens, the tour is intended for true Morse enthusiasts, but you need not be terribly well-versed in the Inspector's code—on the walk I joined our guide was quite happy to change the itinerary to suit the wishes of the party.

The majority of tourists in my group requested a tour that took in some of the more general Oxford sights as well as those associated with Morse. The two-hour meander around the city saw us blinking up at the Ashmolean Museum from the steps of the Ran-



The Sheldonian Theatre, in the sleuthing ground of Inspector Morse

GERAINT LEWIS

dolph Hotel, dodging the college tortoise at Brasenose College, gargoyle-spotting at Exeter College, admiring the effects of the light outside the Sheldonian Theatre, catching an impromptu cello recital inside a college chapel and stepping on to Addison's Walk at Magdalen, all the time being reminded of numerous classic Morse scenarios.

Scoring a few Brownie points for herself, our tele-literate guide revealed our naivety at the liberties taken by TV programme makers. The "colleges" frequented by Morse, it seems, are in fact an imaginative assortment of various bits of different colleges pieced together to deceive viewers. And our Oxford tour guide was especially scathing about one particular

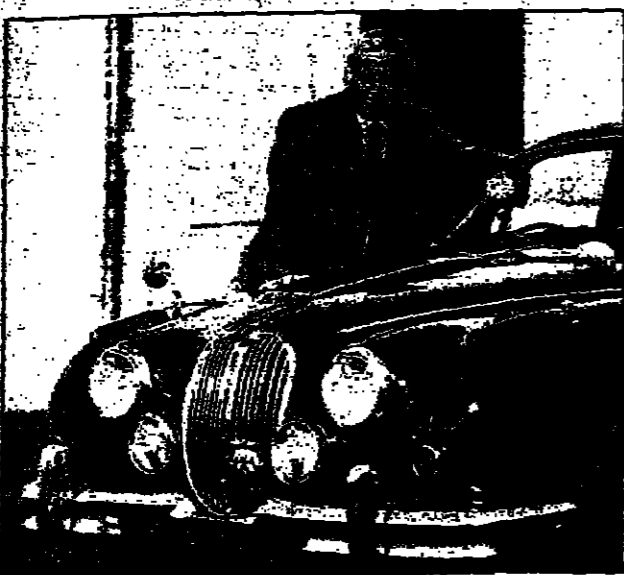
episode that featured... an Oxford tour guide. The on-screen reputation of the profession was tarnished by the provision of some very suspect information indeed. The Morse tour ticket also includes reduced admission to Carfax Tower, a regular location in the programmes. From the very top of the tower you get a chance to peer down into those college quadrangles that you wouldn't otherwise be able to see.

Living in Oxford myself, and wearing heels well worn by several self-devised walking tours staged for friends visiting the city, I wasn't initially inflamed by the prospect of spending a blustery March afternoon visiting the scenes of various invented murders around the city. However, I came away

knowing a great deal more about Oxford, as well as its screen appearances. Certainly for anyone who hasn't previously explored the dreaming spires and is a fan of Dexter's dream-up stories, the Morse tour makes for an entertaining as well as educational way to explore the city.

**Inspector Morse tours** run on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, between March and October. They start at 1.30pm from outside the Oxford Information Centre in the Old School at Gloucester Green (beside the bus station). Prices are £4.50 for adults and £3 for children, including a voucher for reduced admission to Carfax Tower. The tour lasts for two hours. For more information, call 01865 726871 or fax 01865 240261.

Our guide scored Brownie points by revealing our naivety at the liberties taken by TV programme makers



Inspector Morse as played by John Thaw

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# I want to be a ranger ...

The city worker's dream is within reach, thanks to the demand for managed wild habitats. By Hamish Scott

To abandon a well-paid career for a working life in the country is an occasional dream of many a city dweller who has spent too many years staring at a computer screen whilst longing for the sight of buzzards wheeling in an open sky. Most probably dismiss such thoughts as a fantasy, but at agricultural colleges up and down the country a curious phenomenon has emerged: the middle-aged professional retraining for a new career in nature conservation.

"I was always interested in conservation, even in my childhood when it was just called natural history," says Julian Cross, a 44-year-old student at Lackham College in Wiltshire. "I'd go out to the Chilterns with my father to hunt butterflies and I could identify all the wild flowers, but when it came to a career, none of that seemed relevant." Instead, Julian became an archaeological illustrator, escaping only at weekends to satisfy his love of nature.

But attitudes to conservation and the countryside have changed dramatically since Julian left school. Our national parks and forests are visited by millions each year. Unspoilt stretches of the coastline have been acquired by organisations such as the National Trust; downland has been taken out of cultivation and given over to public access; green lanes and roadways are now busier than they have been since the advent of the motor car. This new view of the countryside as a popular amenity rather than an agricultural resource has been matched by an increased concern for its proper conservation: coppicing is on the increase, new hedges are being laid, dry-stone walls repaired, and rare habitats preserved as sites of special scientific interest.

Such changes have created a



Country custodian: Julian Cross retraining for a new career in nature conservation

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN LAWRENCE

demand for country rangers, wardens and custodians trained in ways that might seem strange to some traditional estate managers. They must treat members of the public as welcome visitors, not trespassers, even when a child is swinging on a fragile gate. Their concern for wildlife must extend to birds of prey and other species that a gamekeeper would classify as vermin. They must be prepared for constant scrutiny of all they do, and to justify even the felling of a tree. Experience with people, enthusiasm, and a proven interest in conservation are the qualities required; even those with roots set deep in city pavements may prove to be suited to the life.

For Julian, the first step towards changing his career was to join the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Britain's leading practical conservation charity, which co-ordinates activities involving more than 80,000 volunteers each year. Working unpaid at weekends, Julian learnt how to build cob walls and coppice hazel woods. Also, for the first time in his life, he met countryside rangers and other full-time conservationists. Many, he was astonished to discover, had previously been soldiers or accountants. Now they had, it seemed to him, "the most fantastic jobs in the world". And, as they all assured him, it was not too late to join their ranks.

Most jobs in nature conservation

now require a qualification in countryside management, available at most agricultural colleges, and mature students are generally encouraged. Julian had little difficulty in being accepted on a two-year part-time course at Lackham, leading to an advanced national certificate. The academic course is wide-ranging, with an emphasis on business studies: managing a National Trust estate, or even a remote wildlife preserve, is no refuge from the modern world of market forces.

Julian is now about to start his final term at Lackham. The past two years have not been easy, since the need to spend two days a week at college made it impossible for him to keep his job,

and a grant of just £600 a term has proved inadequate for even basic needs. Thanks to his artistic skills, he has managed to survive by doing picture restoration, but many fellow students have fallen by the wayside and returned to their old careers. Nor does Julian expect that it will be easy to find a job, for cut-backs have affected countryside management as surely as they have the world of archaeology. The difference is that he has yet to meet a burnt-out conservationist. "It's a way of life," he explains. "A vocation to be proud of." And he's just heard of a post that may become available: warden of a water mill with riverbanks and woods to manage. "Now that," he says, "would be idyllic".

One of the most fiddly yet agreeable tasks of the winter is to refurbish the frames that fit into the lifts of the beehives, nine to each storey. Each wooden frame measures 5in by 14in and contains the honeycomb drawn out by the bees from a central sheet of wax foundation.

In an ideal summer, combs come out the hive loaded with liquid honey, each cell lightly capped with wax. To release the harvest, all one has to do is slice off the capping with a hot knife and spin the combs in a centrifuge, so that the honey is flung out and the cells are left empty but intact. The frames can then go straight back into the hives, or be kept in store, for the bees to use again.

Yet ideal conditions seldom prevail. All too often nowadays, some or all of the cells turn out to be full of honey from oil-seed rape, which is white and stiff, like candy, and cannot be extracted. As a result, you are left with a frame full of goo unsuitable for human hand. The only remedy, I have found, is to stand frames along the fence of the orchard and wait for the bees to recycle the fruits of their own labours. After a week or so, the combs are clean, and the frames can be put away.

Unless, that is, badgers find them. Last summer the reject frames survived one night intact. On the second morning the orchard looked as though it had been hit by a bomb. The grass was trampled flat. Frames had been dragged about and flung in all directions. Some had even been heaved through the sheep-netting and carted half-way up the field.

From the violence of the onslaught, I suspected that the raiders had been displeased by the thin wire which runs through each comb in a zigzag, to give it strength. Probably this had caught in their teeth as they guzzled; nevertheless, they had managed to devour the contents of about 40 frames, rape honey, wax and all.

Hence the need, at this time of year, for repair work. It is easy to buy new sheets of wax foundation from specialist suppliers, but to fit them into place requires dexterity and patience. Each frame has to be partially dismantled: slim panel pins have to be eased out, and the thin little bars which have to be detached are easily broken. The whole contraption is usually encrusted with old, dry wax which has to be scraped off: bees are fastidious creatures, and do not like having loads of rubbish dumped in their houses.



Duff Hart-Davis

Bees are fastidious creatures and do not like having rubbish dumped in their houses

Gently does it, then. Each frame takes several minutes to restore, and I find I can complete only half-a-dozen or so before starting to feel that I should be doing something more urgent. With 50 or more to be tackled, the prospect can seem daunting.

The pleasure of the operation derives from producing order out of chaos, and from letting one's mind range ahead to next summer's honey harvest. Every winter brings a great fear that the colonies will not survive – that they will freeze or starve to death – and I can scarcely believe that they are going to come through.

I know that bees survive cold weather by forming a cluster which continually adjusts itself, the insects rotating from cool periphery to warm centre, and vice versa. Yet a severe frost fills me with dread on their behalf, and when they re-emerge – as they recently have from all five hives – it seems a minor miracle. Now, with a feed of candy in the top of each hive, they should go from strength to strength.

As I work on the eaten-out frames, I wonder why badgers do not knock my hives over, especially in winter, when food may be scarce: they must be able to smell that the brood chambers still contain stores of honey. Attacks on hives have been known, and badgers frequently dig out wasps' nests to get at the grubs, apparently impervious to stings. Besides, a well-used badger run passes straight through my orchard, so I know Bork is about most nights. Maybe some unwritten pact is in force between us: he knows that I do not harass him in his sent at the corner of the wood, and in return he does not harass me.

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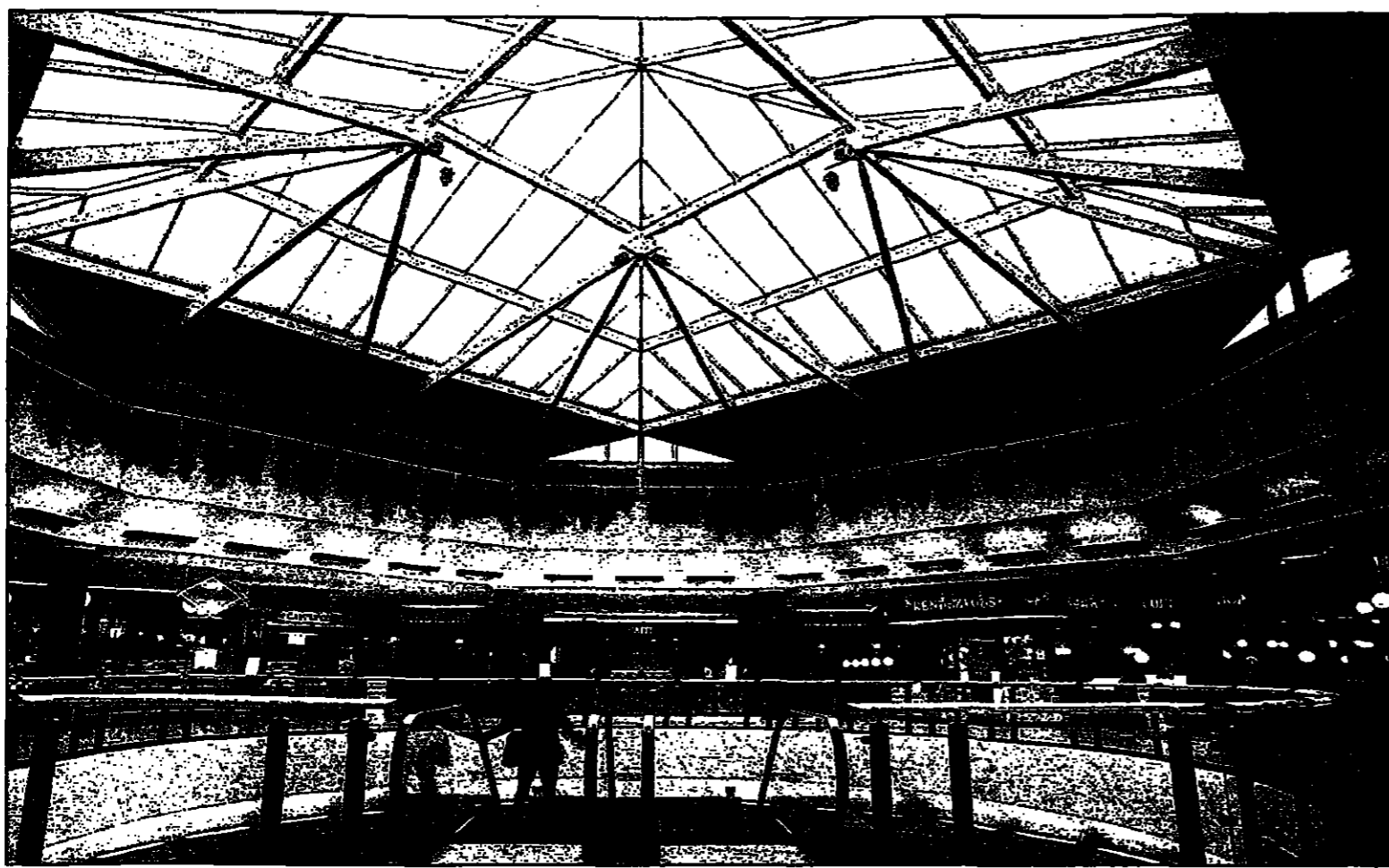
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# all consuming



Brent Cross shopping centre: materialists need a centre the size of the Starship Enterprise

PHOTOGRAPH: EDWARD SYKES

## The mother of malls

By Jane Farnival

For Britain's newest social tribe, a row of shops containing a food store, post office and off licence would not sustain life. Today we have shopping malls, and mall materialists need a centre the size of the Starship Enterprise for life's necessities.

Twenty-one years ago this week, the mother of all those malls opened. Brent Cross shopping centre, off London's North Circular Road, celebrated its birthday. Shoppers were offered tea and coffee at the 1976 price of 25p (it's normally £1.25). Models sashayed down the walkways wearing 1976 fashions: flared trousers, floral kaftans, wet-look boots and cork-soled clogs.

A 21st birthday is a shameless marketing ploy worthy only of a mall. Does it mean that it's now a grown-up place to shop? Has it been drinking in pubs, voting and having sex for several years? Will it be going to university?

Back in the baby years, that opening week didn't go entirely smoothly, recalls Zubi Peera, fashions manager at John Lewis. Some customers became overexcited at the thought of something new and imaginative, that they couldn't get in a high street.

"An elderly customer, convinced that Brent Cross was one enormous shop, came up to the perfume counter in John Lewis and tried to pay at one till for items from all over

### Changes in our shopping habits

#### The move to supermarkets

1976: 524 supermarkets; 51,494 independent small shops. In 1976, of our £8.8bn grocery budget, about 70,000 small shops took about 30 per cent of our spending (£2.7bn). Supermarkets took about 50 per cent of our spending (£4.4bn).

In 1971 we spent less on food: £4.2bn. By 1979, we were spending £13.4bn on food, a rise of £9.2bn.

1995/6: 777 supermarkets; 31,382 small shops. Of our £54.3bn grocery budget, the supermarkets took 65 per cent (£35.1bn). The small shops, which accounted for 80 per cent of our food shops, took about 10 per cent of our spending (£5.3bn).

Sources: AC Nielsen, Shopping centres' own statistics, Biss Lancaster.

#### The spread of shopping centres

Brent Cross, North London: Opened in 1976, with 400,000 visitors in the first year; in 1996 they had reached 12 million.

Merry Hill, Birmingham: Opened in 1985 with 11.5 million visitors in the first year; by 1996 the number of visitors had

#### reached 23 million.

Metro, Newcastle: Opened in 1986 with 12 million visitors in the first year; in 1996 numbers were up to 28.5 million.

Meadow Hall, Sheffield: Opened in 1990 with 20 million visitors in the first year; by 1996 visitors were up to 30 million.

Lakeside, Thurrock, Essex: Opened in 1991 with 9 million visitors in the first year; by 1996 the number of visitors to this most successful of shopping centres had reached 24 million.

NB These figures may possibly be inflated by the fact that video-monitors in shopping centres are known to count pushchairs and even large bags as "visitors". Metro Newcastle's figure is based on car parking, assuming an average of 2.5 shoppers per car.

#### New out-of-town shopping centres currently under construction

Bluewater Park, Dartford  
Cribbs Causeway, Bristol  
Dumplington, Manchester  
White Rose, Leeds  
Brae Head, Glasgow

The professional middle classes may be snobby about malls, but in 1976 we got what we wanted. Mugging was on the increase; Brent Cross had visible safety in the shape of the security guards. Most small shops could not offer the ease of credit card transactions and guarantees of sound goods; Brent Cross and the chain stores were more reliable. Refunds for poor merchandise were easier to come by, and credit cards had become the main means of exchange. High streets were busy, wet and polluted; now you could park under cover, sit down with the children, and find a clean lavatory when you wanted one.

Today, ironically, we prize the one-off, the shops that specialise in health foods, second-hand clothes, flowers. Individualists can stay away, and seek antiques shops elsewhere. Mall materialists like the idea of antiques, but they buy only repro. John Lewis stocks that.

Nor do they want to buy scruffy, dirty vegetables, however charming the greengrocer is. The market area closes next month at the Arndale Centre in Wandsworth, south-east London. "Community essentials such as the fishmonger and watchmaker are being transferred into kiosks down the main walkway," says the centre director, John Holt. "We're spending £17m on refurbishing, with themed restaurants and virtual reality games."

To stay alive, the centres must evolve. The Government has stopped smiling on them, and they cannot expand because of clampdowns on planning permission.

Hillary Hudson-Oldnall, marketing manager of Lakeside shopping centre, says: "We're highlighted as the bad guys that spoiled it all. But supermarkets did most to spoil it, and we deliberately don't have a supermarket here." She has a cheaper area for smaller shops and foreign store try-outs, so that shoppers can see the latest. She is proud of her two supervised play areas.

What of the future? The supporters of shopping malls think they are providing a lead to town planners. "Town centres have got us to copy," says Hillary. "It is hard to criticise a well-designed, managed environment, where parking is free and easy."

peared. Pretty churches in Exeter and Bromley stand pathetically isolated on traffic islands.

But despite the complaints of environmentalists, people flock to the successors of Brent Cross. The hot new Lakeside Shopping centre at Thurrock, in Essex, has seen "footfall" increase from 9 million in 1991 to 24 million last year.

Marjorie Price, who lives right next door to the Brent Cross car park, has no truck for the critics. She shops there three times a week and still uses local shops for special things, such as hardware and camera film.

"Brent Cross gets blamed, but the things I buy there are things I would have bought in the West End. Selfridges misses out, not the local shops. All shopping areas need to be managed. Hendon Central, built in the Twenties, is getting filthier, with deserted shops. If they turned them from 50 shops to 25 that worked, it wouldn't be so bad."

Professor Robert East, who researches consumer behaviour at Kingston University, Surrey, is even more rhapsodic. He claims: "For people with boring lives, mall shopping is interesting, stimulating and glitzy. In my last research, only 1 per cent of people actually disliked the shopping trip."

The march of the mall is inexorable. City centres in county towns such as Aylesbury, or busy suburbs such as Watford, have long disap-

peared. Pretty churches in Exeter and Bromley stand pathetically isolated on traffic islands.

What a knockable subject the shopping centre is: a focus of righteous indignation. The malls are accused of stripping the high street of stores, forcing people to get into cars and car parks.

And from the point of view of the small shop owner it is hardly surprising. During the Seventies the number of corner shop grocers fell sharply, from 86,565 in 1971 to 51,494 in 1979. Today there are fewer than 30,000. After the Monopolies and Mergers Commission paved the way for supermarkets and petrol stations to sell newspapers and magazines in 1992, 2,000 shops were closed within two years.

The march of the mall is inexorable. City centres in county towns such as Aylesbury, or busy suburbs such as Watford, have long disap-

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## History in a velvet cape

Fancy putting on your own performance? A sale of theatrical costumes offers a chance of real glamour. Robin Duff reports

Want to be beyond retro? Fancy striking out anew with an old look? Then don't settle for imitation; have the real thing. This country has a formidable supply of antique costumes and textiles - most of them at reasonable prices and, best of all, still fabulously wearable. One of the most significant sales of the season will be held at Sotheby's next week when a large chunk of the Maddermarket

an original 18th-century costume off the rail to wear on stage. This is a unique collection. The costumes date from the 1750s to the Nineteen Sixties and most are in superb and wearable condition, despite having enjoyed several periods in the spotlight.

One of the most historically important pieces is the "Suffield Gown", named after the Dowager Lady Suffield, who donated the dress to the theatre after the Second World War. It dates from the middle of the 18th century and is made of ivory silk brocade with silver and gold threads. The dress is scattered with large silk purple and pink flowers and carries an estimate of £800-£1,200.

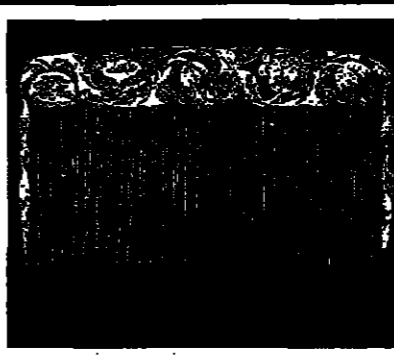
Another highlight of the sale is a green velvet gown in the Aesthetic Movement style, circa 1878, sporting Medieval-inspired sleeves, with a matching bag suspended from the waist. The estimate is £350-£500.

Vivienne Westwood recently predicted that the bustle would make a return. Jean-Paul Gaultier, as we know, still loves a good corset. Other designers have begun to play with notions of padding out the hips and bottom - all ideas borrowed from the past. At the Maddermarket sale there is a wonderful selection of Victorian dresses with bustles and indeed hooped petticoats and corsets dating from 1860 to 1890, with estimates of £500-£700.

There are some truly beautiful Twenties evening gowns and gowns in panne velvet - perfect for this season's style preoccupations - with estimates from about £200 apiece; sparkling eveningwear; and even some oddities such as Spanish stoles and shawls, gloves and other accessories, at estimates from about £150.

The great thing about buying garments like these is that not only do they have historical importance - and can be a sound investment - they also bring the romance of acquiring a little slice of drama in the form of a silk dress or top hat and tails. These garments have true star quality.

The sale of the Maddermarket Theatre collection of period costumes and accessories will be held at Sotheby's London on Thursday, 1 March. For further information, call 0171-493 8080.



The Suffield dress (top) and a 17th-century Jamaican tortoiseshell hair comb

PHOTOGRAPHS: SOTHEBY'S

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### Shopping guide for the mall materialist, 1997

Piazza: cold, open square supposed to embody upmarket metro chic. One-off shops enlivened by street entertainers and pickpockets in the middle, with one freezing couple taking cappuccinos in the open air café.

Galleria: empty shopping centre with cinema and water feature (fountain) in the middle. Contains either gift shops designed to suck your credit card dry in five minutes, or 'retail outlets', aka cheap factory shops.

Retail park: no park, apart from car park.

Understaffed warehouses the size of aircraft hangars containing electrical appliances which, when you ask to buy them, are often out of stock or damaged. Take a picnic and Portapotti. Restaurants and lavatories are rare.

Shopping village: shops miles from a village. Expensive restaurants to take advantage of the fact that you are a captive. Do not confuse with "village shops" (see Postman Pat books or The Archers for more details).

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هكذا من الأصل



Gavin Green reports from Geneva, the catwalk of car shows, where Mercedes chose its moment to step wildly out of character

It seems odd that Switzerland, Europe's capital of financial excess, should play host to a bout of sudden pragmatism from the world's motor industry. But this year's Geneva Show, which usually bears about as much reality to the motoring world as the Paris catwalk does to this summer's M&S fashions, was full of sober, sensible motor cars. In particular, it was full of cleverly engineered small cars, which promise great fuel frugality, bold new styles and low-cost motoring.

Just to make the Swiss feel a little more at home, the star car was a Mercedes-Benz. But instead of the usual oversized limo, from the back seat of which waddle overweight politicians, plutocrats and peers, the star Mercedes at Geneva was the long-awaited A-class, the smallest car that the Stuttgart maker has ever released. It is also quite the most radical tiny tot since the Mini of 38 years ago.

It is ingenious on so many fronts. First, it's shorter than a Fiesta but has as much cabin space as a Mondeo. This remarkable space efficiency is largely due to its under-body drive-train, enabling more of the total length of the car to be devoted to people.

Second, it boasts Renault Espace-style cabin versatility, with the possibility of removing the rear seat and, if you want, the front passenger seat, too. Thus it can be transformed from a five-seater into a single-seater van. Removing the rear seat gives easily enough room for mountain bikes. The rear seat is also fore-aft adjustable. In its forward position, the boot is cavernous – and there's still enough leg-room for three backbenchers.

The cleverest part of the car is its twin floor-panels. They help give the baby much greater strength than other cars of this size. Mercedes says it is almost as crash-worthy as the big E-class, one of the world's safest cars. There is probably a bit of PR puff here – after all, the nose of the car is so short that there can't possibly be as much cushioning as on a car with a bonnet the size of an aircraft carrier's deck. Nonetheless, it's a fair bet that there has never been a safer small car.

From launch, engines include 1.4-litre and 1.6 petrol four-cylinder units. A couple of four-pot turbodiesels follow in early 1998, one which is reputed to average 62.5mpg. British sales start in spring



Teutonic Tardis: Mercedes breaks the mould with the A-class, left, whose capacious cabin defies exterior Fiesta-like proportions

There were both three- and five-door versions, with little engines under the rear seat and highly space-efficient cabins, as well as various 'lad Mini' styling cues. Sadly, and despite all the hysteresis in certain media quarters, ('It's the new Mini!'), the Spirit has about as much in common with the real Mini, slated for the year 2000, as the Williams-Renault F1 car on display on the stand opposite.

The three- and five-door Spiritals are in fact 18-month-old styling studio models, dusted off by Rover to try to win some PR points and steal some of the Mercedes A-class's thunder. (Don't forget, Rover is owned by BMW, Mercedes' deadliest rival.) The real new Mini will have a conventional front transverse engine and, by all accounts, won't be the technological big leap that some of us had hoped.

Ford, which got the new-wave small car far underway with the Ka, is now thinking small in the coupe class. At Geneva, it launched its two-door Puma, a Vauxhall Tigra competitor using the mechanicals of the recently revised Fiesta. Like all recent Fords, it looks either bold or weird, depending on your tastes. I like it. A new 1.25bhp 1.7-litre engine is the only motor available.

Further upmarket, back in more familiar Geneva Show territory, Audi – Europe's fastest improving quality car maker – took the covers off the new A6, rival to BMW's 5-series. It looks great, like all recent Audis. Early reports suggest that it drives as well as it looks.

British makers, who perversely have tended to dominate recent Geneva Shows (last year it was the Jaguar XK8, the year before the MGF, before that the Aston Martin DB7) had a quieter time. Even those masters of high-cost luxury, Aston Martin and Rolls-Royce, were fairly quiet. Geneva is usually where they make a splash, secure in the knowledge that at least here many of the show visitors can actually afford their wares.

Rather, Geneva showed that the small car is now truly back in fashion again. Look at today's traffic and pollution, and it's easy to understand why.

More of a surprise is who's leading the charge, and that Mercedes chose the Geneva Show to spread the good news.

The Geneva Motor Show runs until 16 March at the Palexpo, next to the airport.

## Birth of the baby Benz



Spiritual enlightenment: Rover was the father of the micro car with the Mini, but its latest bid in a booming market was more a spoiler against the A-class Benz. Ford's new Puma, right, could be the cat's whiskers in Tigra territory



1998. No one is being specific on prices yet, but expect the A-class to cost from about £14,000 – the same as an up-market VW Golf or plain Jane Mondeo.

The A-class is a huge gamble for Mercedes, not so long ago one of the world's most conservative car makers. The company is betting that enough people are prepared to pay medium-car money for a technologically advanced baby car. It

overturns the bigger-the-car-the-better mindset which Mercedes, as much as any other maker, has helped to foster. It should prove particularly attractive in big, congested, affluent cities, where small cars really are a boon.

Hot on the wheels of the recently launched Ford Ka, other car companies went small car crazy at Geneva. The Volkswagen group unveiled its Ka com-

petitor, the Seat Arosa, preparatory to launching its own VW-badged equivalent, the Pico, in December. The Arosa is a dull-looking little thing, four inches shorter than the Ka, but promising great fuel economy. It comes in under the current Ibiza, just as the Pico will come in under the Polo.

Vauxhall showed a revamped version of the pretty-looking but otherwise pretty

average Corsa, with endless minor updates to bring it up to scratch. The most significant is a new three-cylinder, 973cc engine, reckoned to average almost 50mpg. It's still good for 110mph.

Rover, which invented the modern small car in the Mini and has been doing its best to try to improve on it ever since, showed yet another "new concept" Mini proposal, this one called the Spirit.



## Seat unleashes its pocket rocket

Road test:  
Seat Ibiza  
Cupra Sport  
By John  
Simister

Self-denial in the name of a social conscience is officially over. Or at least it is as far as cars are concerned. Why else would a magazine called *Max Power*, full of souped-up hatchbacks painted in outrageous colours, be the most popular motoring rag in Britain? No doubt we can put this phenomenon, and the regrettable laddishness that goes with it, down to youthful rebellion. But there has always been a case for a good, hot hatchback, and on the back of its extreme resurgence in youth culture comes a rebirth in the mainstream.

Into this encouraging auto-sociological scenario is pitched Seat's latest and hottest Ibiza, the 2.0 GTI 16V, which is powered by an engine lifted from Volkswagen's Golf GTI 16V. The Ibiza is a small car, virtually a supermini, and a 2.0-litre engine with 150bhp ready to burst forth is a big motor for one so small. The idea of big-engined tiddler has always appealed, which is

why the Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9 and the Renault Clio Williams came close to cult status among connoisseurs of driving, and this new Seat fills just perfectly the gap left by their demise.

There have been rapid Ibizas before, specifically a 1.8 16V, and a 2.0-litre with a lazier eight-valve engine, but the combination of cubic capacity and free-breathing valve-gear lifts the experience to a new level. You can guess this even before you scorch off into the distance, because the Seat sits on 12-spoked alloy wheels of enormous dimensions. There are various items of aerodynamic addenda, too, and inside we find rainbow-hued seat facings and silver dials to relieve the dark dullness elsewhere in the cabin.

What you don't see outside, though, is an obvious exhaust pipe. That won't impress the *Max Power* folk at all. You do hear its presence, though. It emits not the expected rorty rasp, but a whoosh like that of a huge hairdrier a fraction of a

second after you press the accelerator. Simultaneously, the small Seat shoots forward – even if you're in a high gear and starting your spurt from a low speed – as though near-weightless.

That's one of the most appealing features of this crazy little car. It hurtles with so little apparent effort, with potent push on offer right up to 7,000rpm. This is not the sweetest of engines, but its muscles are abundant. And the easy hurtling ability is especially useful given the gear change's obstructiveness – some honing is needed here – because you are not forever having to shift up and down to keep the power coming.

Then there's the handling, so interactive that you practically feel you're part of the car. You would expect a car like this to grip firmly and feel planted on the road, but the steering tells you exactly what's happening under-tyre, and there's a feeling of balance which eggs you on into fine-tuning your cornering line with the accelerator as well as the

steering wheel. The combination is captivating. You may even, for a fleeting second or two, imagine you're a rally driver.

Here's something to help your imagination along. Seat won the Formula Two World Rally Championship – open to 2.0-litre, front-wheel-drive cars – last year, using Ibizas not too far removed from this one. This year, the Spanish company's UK arm has created an organisation called Cupra Sport, to prepare cars for the British Championship. That's why the first 2.0 16Vs have loud "Cupra" stickers on the flanks and the tail, and lack a sunroof and air-conditioning. Later in the year, there will be a more discreet version with those accessories, and inevitably a higher price (£15,600) than the Cupra car's £14,595.

This is a lot of money. But then the Seat Ibiza 2.0 GTI 16V, from the extrovert arm of the Volkswagen empire, is a heck of a lot of fun. Welcome back, truly hot hatchback. It's as though you've never been away.



Seat Ibiza Cupra Sport Price: £14,595 on the road. Engine: 1984cc, four cylinders, 16 valves, 150bhp at 6,000rpm; five-speed gearbox, front-wheel drive. Top speed: 134mph, 0-60 in 7.7sec. Fuel consumption: 28-33mpg

Rivals (with on-the-road prices): Alfa 145 1.8 Twin Spark, £14,600 approx: Arrival of revised 145 imminent in UK, with quality and refinement to match startling looks. Peugeot 106 GTI, £12,665: Smaller-engined than the Seat, cheaper, too. Not as fast but nearly as amusing. Suitable successor to 205 GTI. Renault Mégane Coupé 16V, £15,340: Intended to replace Clio Williams, whose engine it shares. Looks good, has less room and stodgier steering. Rover 200i, £15,995: Very quick, with clever Variable Valve Control engine, but less surefooted than Seat. Rover wood looks odd in a hot hatch.

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Nigel and Lesley Kemp built their own four-bedroom detached house. The plot cost £41,000, the building work was £71,000. The lender's market valuation of the completed property is £160,000.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER JONES

## The DIY mortgage

Up to 10 years ago, barely a handful of lenders were prepared to offer mortgages to people who wanted to build their own homes. Today, almost 30 lenders have specific arrangements for self-builders, while eight more are prepared to consider loans in specific cases. Among them are Bradford & Bingley, Nationwide, Alliance & Leicester, Skipton, Bank of Scotland, Northern Rock, TSB and Bank of Ireland.

This easing of mortgage rules has undoubtedly helped tens of thousands of people who each year embark on the process of designing and building their own home. But the practice is not totally disinterested. As a spokeswoman for Norwich and Peterborough Building Society, which is very active in the market, explains: "People who build their own homes are among those with the greatest commitment to keeping their mortgages going. If you go to all that trouble, it takes a lot to halt your mortgage payments."

So how does the system work? Basically, almost all lenders are prepared to offer their entire range of loans to borrowers - whether fixed, discounted or at variable rates. In most cases, the loan available will cover up to 95 per cent of the final value of the property, including land purchase.

The process involved in obtaining a mortgage is detailed - probably far more so than for traditional borrowers. Lenders expect in-depth cost projections, timings, details of who the key builders will be and even their qualifications.

If a mortgage is agreed, payments are usually staggered into four or five stages. The first is often linked to the cost of the land, although many lenders will not lend money for this purpose.

Moneyfacts, a monthly finance guide, shows that more than half of lenders won't consider this. The rest will average between 75 and 80 per cent at this stage.

Thereafter, stage payments to builders will usually be at the footings/ground floor stage, when ground floor walls are up, when the first floor is completed and when the roof is on. The final stage is based on a surveyor's final estimate of a property's value. Thereafter the self-builder should be able to reclaim VAT on the cost of materials used on the home.

Before going to a lender, do your homework as to which one can meet your specific needs. Moneyfacts, Individual Homes and Self Build carry regular details of what is on offer.

Moneyfacts, 01692 500765; 'Individual Homes' and 'Self Build' can be ordered through newsagents.

Nic Cicuttii

## I built the house myself ...

The option of self-build is increasingly attractive, reports Michael Holmes

When Nigel and Lesley Kemp wanted a larger home, they decided to build it themselves. Having previously lived in a small property on the edge of an estate, they now have a spacious, four-bedroom, detached house in a pretty Somerset village. Nigel, a teacher, and Lesley, a psychiatric nurse, found a plot through a local estate agent and designed their new home together, with help from a local building consultant.

"Most of our spare time over the last two years has been dedicated to it," says Nigel. "There are still a few things to do, but we are now at the end of what has been a very enjoyable experience. It has been hard work at times, but our decisions have been made together and there have been no major disagreements."

The couple employed local sub-contractors, and also carried out

some building themselves. "The most tense time was waiting for the planners to make their decisions on the design," says Lesley.

The Kemps' house, which is clad in reclaimed local stone, cost them £71,000 to build, and their plot cost £41,000. The lender's market valuation of the property is £160,000. "We won't be going anywhere for a while, though," says Lesley. "We have expansion space in the roof for two further bedrooms and a bathroom - this place is designed for the future."

Self-build is proving an increasingly popular way to move up the housing ladder. Last year alone, around 18,000 families chose to design and build their own home, saving, on average, 15 to 20 per cent of their completed property's market value. The cost of a new home is reduced because the self-builder takes on the risk of enterprise normally borne by a developer, cutting

out the developer's profit and the cost of sales and marketing.

"Self-build is by no means as straightforward as buying an existing property," says Julian Owen,

of Associated Self Build Architects (ASBA), a nationwide network of professionals established to help people build their own home. "But the pay-off includes the freedom to design an individual home, often on a more generous plot than found on new developments, together with the chance to cut costs even further for those who are DIY-oriented."

The potentially rich rewards of self-build lie at the end of an exciting, if stressful road: searching for and buying a building plot, designing the home, arranging planning and building consent, choosing the fixtures and fittings, appointing a builder and then seeing the project through. "It is a lot to take on for a busy working family,"

agrees Julian Owen. "However, over recent years an industry has evolved around these needs, establishing a route that makes it hard to go wrong."

Getting a mortgage on a house that does not yet exist has traditionally been difficult, so only those with sufficient funds to buy a plot outright could consider building an individual home. Today, a host of major lenders, including the Bradford & Bingley and Nationwide building societies, and Barclays Bank, will lend on land, while the TSB is able to advance up to 95 per cent of a plot's value and up to 95 per cent of the total building cost. Finance for construction, however, is still paid in arrears, so most self-builders find they need a deposit of around 10 to 15 per cent to get their project started.

The starting-point for most such projects is the search for a suitable building plot. This has recently been made far easier by a nationwide database of land and renovation opportunities. "Details from estate agents, surveyors, developers and landowners are compiled into this single source, putting private individuals on the same footing as many developers," says Gill Dawson, who runs the land-search service Plotfinder. "Anyone can register, and for the price of a three-minute premium-rate phone call we will send them a complete list of land and renovation opportunities in any three counties."

Help and advice on design and building are available from architects, surveyors, freelance home-designers, project managers and specialist package companies. They will create a design that meets a household's needs and aspirations, as well as satisfying the requirements of the planners. When it comes to construction,

self-builders can opt for as much or as little involvement as they want, with cost savings usually proportional to their own input. Many choose to appoint a local builder, or manage the project themselves employing local sub-contractors. There are also architects and other project managers who will oversee the build for a negotiable fee.

The Individual Homes Home-building & Renovating Show is at the NEC, Birmingham, 20-23 March. Entry: £7 - or ring the show's hotline on 0181-710 2186 for half-price tickets. More information about self-build homes is available from ASBA (0800 387310) or Plotfinder (0891 516526 - calls last about three minutes and cost 45p per minute cheap rate, 50p at other times). Michael Holmes is editor of 'Individual Homes' magazine.

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50 من الأصل

Can stock market investors learn anything from the way that market speculators such as George Soros behave? On the face of it, the answer has to be no. Investment and speculation, so conventional wisdom has it, are two distinct arts.

One is about the patient accumulation of wealth through careful selection of shares for the medium and longer term. Speculation, by contrast, is all about trading short-term possibilities, where what matters more than the intrinsic value of a share is its trading momentum and the state of market sentiment.

The game, as Keynes said, is about trying to guess what the rest of the players have – not what you have yourself.

But don't be fooled into thinking that the distinction is quite as clear-cut as all that. Victor Niederhoffer, one of New York's best-known market traders, who has worked with Mr Soros for many years, wants us to know that investment, speculation and even gambling are all in fact "first cousins".



Jonathan Davis

## Stock markets are casinos – but unwary gamblers may still win out

He quotes Ernest Cassel, the turn-of-the-century City financier who befriended Edward VIII and became a pillar of the financial Establishment: "When I was young," recalled Cassel, "people called me a gambler. As the scale of my operations increased, I became known as a speculator. Now I am called a banker. But I have been doing the same thing all my life."

Mr Niederhoffer, like many New York traders, is a poor boy from the Bronx who has made good, and

now wants to tell us how it was done. His thesis, born of 40-odd years of experience, is that investors can profitably learn from any walk of life where people make their livings out of staking money on risk and reward.

That means studying what happens at the race track and in the casino as much as poring over the financial pages of the newspapers. His book, *Education of A Speculator*, has already sold 100,000 copies in the United States, which suggests he may be on to something.

It is a strange and diverting mixture, half autobiography, half esoteric trading lore, thrown together in a way which suggests that Mr Niederhoffer's mind, like the universe, and the stock market itself, is in a permanent state of Brownian motion.

But although it may sound fanciful at first sight, what he has to say about horse-racing and the casinos is perfectly pertinent to the stock market.

As many professional investors will tell you, the mental discipline required to back horses and to trade in financial markets is very similar. It is all about managing money and making the right trade-offs between risk and reward.

Mr Niederhoffer is at pains to emphasise the great importance of understanding the house "take" in any field of money-making. As even the most innumerate adult tends to know, the relentless "edge" that a casino has at roulette from paying out at 36 to 1 on what is a 37-1 bet will eventually grind even the wealthiest punter down.

In horse-racing, something like 20 per cent of the money that the punter wagers is eaten up in the various "takes" – tax, the bookies' margin, and so on. Over time, it means that the racegoer has to make 20 per cent on his money just to cover the various hidden costs.

What does this all mean for the stock market investor? Well, as Mr Niederhoffer points out, there is a "take" in the stock market too. It comes in several forms. Some are visible, like the commission you have to pay a broker to buy and sell shares, or the upfront fee charged by a unit trust group.

Others, like the bid/offer spread, the difference between the price at which you can buy and sell a share or unit trust, are less immediately apparent, but just as important over the long term.

Then there is the Government, which wants its pound of flesh in the form of income and capital gains tax.

Add it altogether and it can have a significant bearing on your investment returns. The great beauty of

the stock market, however, is that it is one of the few forms of money-making where the long-run return you stand to make – say 7-8 per cent after inflation – is sufficiently large to exceed the "take" you have to pay to take part.

That is one reason why equity investment is a suitable place for pension funds and widows and orphans to put their money. Although Keynes likened it to a casino, the stock market is one casino where gambler's ruin does not necessarily await the unwary.

But note the word necessarily. If you buy and sell shares too actively, and do so unintelligently, it is perfectly possible for the "take" to erode most of the returns you make, just as it does at the race track. This is where Mr Niederhoffer's tales from the racetrack and the card table are worth noting.

The most successful punters are those who only bet where they have a clear "edge", they make most of their money by betting against the most popular runners.

They are also shrewd enough to know that any simple betting strategy will only work for so long. Patterns always run in cycles, and there is no single Rosetta Stone which holds the key to long-run success.

And so, although you may not need to read *The Secrets of Professional Turf Betting* by Robert L. Bacon to find out (as Mr Niederhoffer suggests), it is with the stock market.

The morals for ordinary investors are clear. Don't trade too actively; it only enriches the brokers and the market-makers. Don't follow the crowd too slavishly into popular stocks; they will never be long-run winners.

Don't fall for simple rule-of-thumb investment adages; a strategy based on picking the highest yielding shares will work well for a while, but not for ever.

Look to put your money into areas where you believe you have some "edge", and allow time and compound interest to do the rest for you.

## Can gold be mined for profits?

Prices have been bubbling up recently. Rachel Fixsen considers the latest rush

No matter how splendidly equity markets may perform, even the most unsentimental investor will always find something alluring in the precious gleam of yellow metal – gold.

As if to encourage the cupidity of investors in this, the scariest of metals, gold markets have been bubbling away in recent weeks, while bullion prices have heated up.

Gold reached \$360 (£225) a troy ounce at the end of last week, up from \$337 a fortnight before, as buyers stopped worrying European central banks would offload their vast gold stocks on to the market.

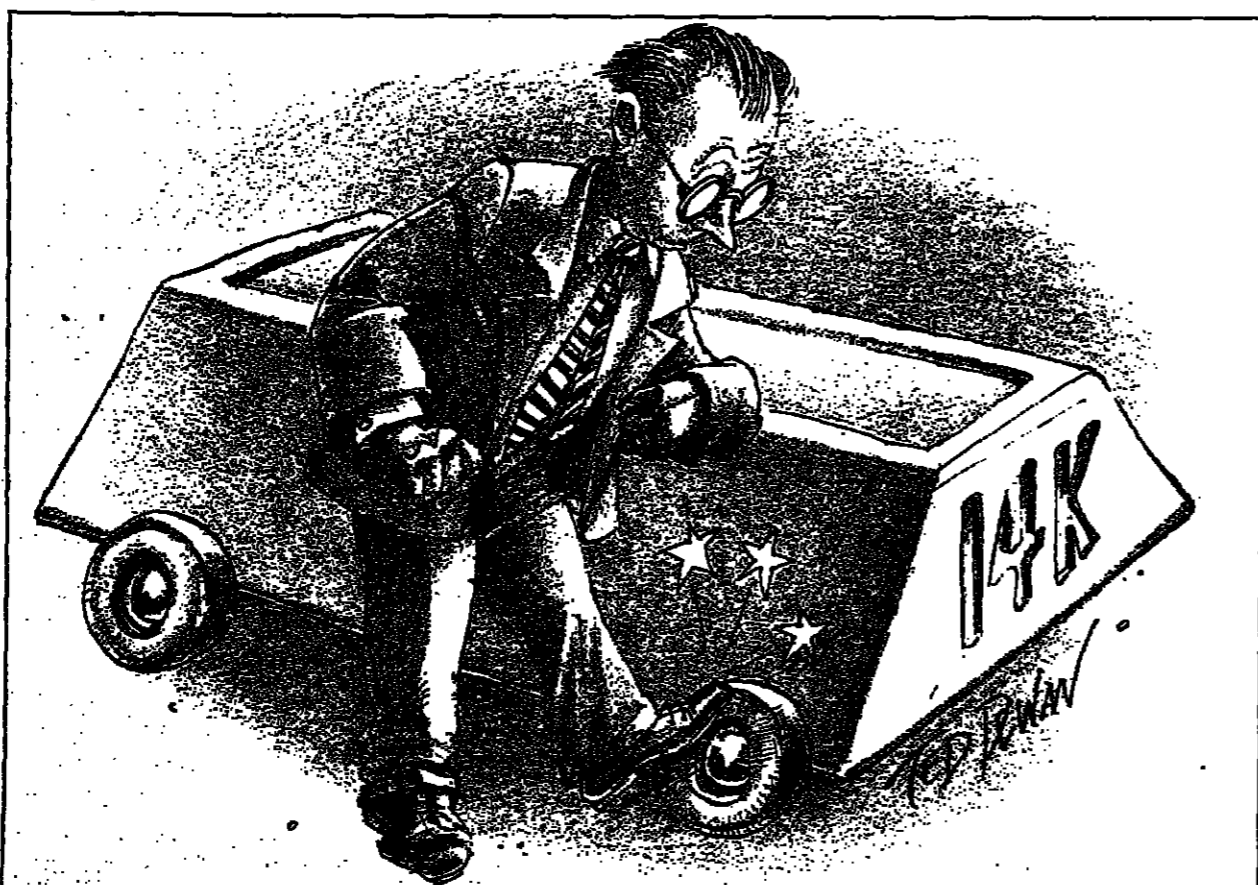
Small investors might now be tempted into the action by buying the yellow metal. But you could burn your fingers by dipping in – unless you really pick your moment.

"It's better [at this price] than above \$400... but whenever small investors move in, it's too late and the smart money's already thinking of an exit route," warns Andy Smith, precious metals analyst at UBS, the Swiss banking group.

Nigel Tooley, director of the bullion department at auctioneers Spink, says: "It's a question of getting in when the price is low and getting out when it's high." You could have made a reasonable profit by buying gold a few weeks ago when it was £208 an ounce and selling it now at £223, he adds.

If you hope to join a gold rush, consider shares of gold mining companies Ashanti, Kinross or Driefontein. Their performance often exaggerates movements in gold prices. If you believe gold will rise, investing in gold shares would give you three times the result – either way.

Mercury Asset Management's Gold & General fund and Save & Prosper's Gold &



Exploration funds are two high-risk unit trusts investing in gold shares.

People buy gold unit trust investments for several reasons. Save & Prosper's investment director, Michael Ashbridge, says: "Gold has a fascination with certain investors... it always has a very speculative feel." But he adds that mining firms are increasingly able to get gold out of the ground more cheaply, while hitherto unknown gold deposits in Eastern Europe are becoming accessible.

Gold-based funds did badly in the past 12 months, with a £1,000 investment having shrunk to £705.21 in Mercury's fund and to £861.61 in Save & Prosper's. But over five years the same investment has made healthy gains, standing at £3,086.85 and £2,321.47 respectively, according to Moneyfacts data.

Gold has traditionally been seen as a lasting store of value – an asset to hold when others are depreciating. But few of the old reasons for investing in it still apply. Economists

believe high inflation will be a thing of the past for Western economies as European Monetary Union approaches. And with no exchange controls, the need to hedge against currency devaluation has diminished.

Fears persist that European governments will sell central bank gold to raise money to meet criteria for monetary union. The Dutch central bank compounded these worries when it said in January it had sold 300 tonnes of gold from its reserves. Andy Smith at UBS predicts that in a year's time the gold price will have dropped, though in the next month or two it could bounce up towards \$400.

But prospects for gold are not all bad. Just before the 1987 stock market crash gold prices rose. This year, warnings from Alan Greenspan, the head of the US Federal Reserve, that stock markets are overvalued could spark a similar spell of interest.

Demand for gold jewellery reached record levels at the end of last year, according to the World Gold Council,

which monitors about 75 per cent of the gold market.

If you are looking for a good moment to buy, any December could be it. January is traditionally a good time for physical gold demand, with people buying jewellery for Chinese New Year, the Indian wedding season and Ramadan, says Rhona O'Connell, analyst at brokers T Hoare & Co.

So these days gold is best as a hedge or for cashing in on a short-term bounce in the market price. Long-term it is as useless as stashing money under your mattress.

Apart from short-term fluctuations, the price has stagnated over the past 10 years. Gold peaked at \$850 an ounce in 1980, but since then it has hovered beneath \$500. However, as our table shows, the dollar gold price index is distinct from local currency prices, which may be higher because of local demand.

If you decide to buy physical gold, the path is strewn with obstacles. If you buy gold bars, you have to pay VAT on them. And keeping gold in a

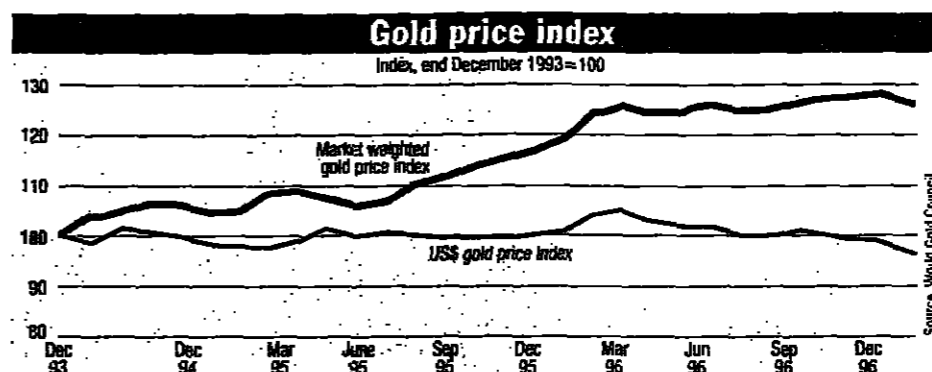
deposit could cost you around 1 per cent of its value annually.

You can avoid paying VAT either by holding gold offshore, or buying kruggerands or sovereigns which are considered second hand and therefore not liable for VAT. Spink sells one-ounce Kruggerands at about £10 over the market price (0171-930 7888).

Platinum can be a better short-term investment than gold. "When prices go up, platinum moves much faster and further than gold," says Jeremy Coombes, marketing manager at bullion company Johnson Matthey. The platinum market is much smaller, with world production only a tenth that of gold.

Johnson Matthey (0171-269 8000) offers investors bars of platinum in various sizes. For example, you could buy a 10 gramme bar for around £100. Most customers leave their bars in store in Switzerland to avoid paying VAT.

Gold is good for a flutter or to diversify large portfolios. But look elsewhere for an investment that really gleams.



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**SCOTTISH WIDOWS**

## Getting a profit on the table

The value of antique furniture is rising again. By John Windsor

You could be sitting on a good investment if you buy antique furniture now. After stagnating for years, it has jumped in value by 14 per cent over the past year, outperforming both the equity and housing markets. Next week there will be furniture buying opportunities at the British Antique Dealers Association (BADA) fair in London, and at auctions that include a dining room sale at Bonhams.

The value of antique furniture will continue to rise at 8 per cent a year, according to John Andrews, who calculated the 30th annual furniture price index for the Antique Collectors Club.

The spurt in prices has been caused by the upturn in the housing market. Mr Andrews says: "We thought the wild fluctuations of the Eighties were over - but here we go again."

Mahogany dining tables of the Regency, William IV and early Victorian periods are

making the running in price, he reports. One that cost £300-£600 less than a decade ago would now cost £2,000-£3,000. The cheapest is not necessarily the best investment. He advises: "Buy the best you can afford - £3,000-£5,000 will buy a dining table with sustainable value."

You do not need the eye of a connoisseur to spot finely crafted antique tables. The most visible clue is the "feeding" - the parallel fluted chamfers that decorate table and chair legs and the edges of tables. It is smooth if machine made but there will be rough cuts on corners if a v-shaped chisel blade has been used.

Grime - or, more politely, patina - indicates age and is worth money. The wood should have rich "figuring" - the pattern made by the grain - and rich colour. It should not have been re-polished.

When buying tables, look for good weight - a generous plank of mahogany for the top, a sturdy block at the top

of the pillar and stout bearers on the underside of the top. The casting of brass claw-feet should be detailed, not botched. Avoid mended chairs.

At Bonhams' dining room sale on Tuesday, furniture specialist David Higgs has raised pre-sale estimates by about 25 per cent compared with last year - but there is still enough demand to push prices higher.

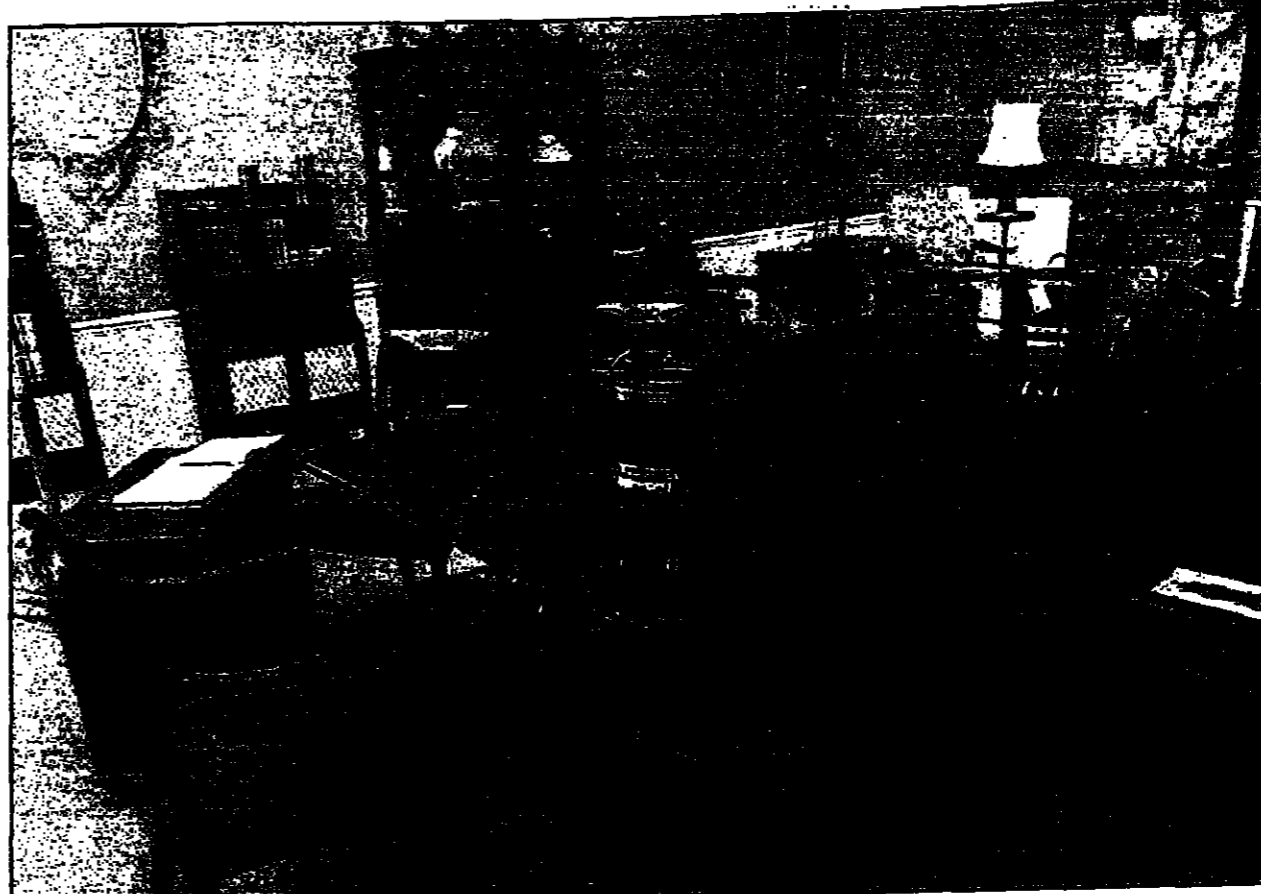
Breakfast tables - more suitable for smaller dinner parties and, oddly enough, originally known as supper tables - are being fought over. Chairs are scarcer than tables, especially "longer" sets of over six. In the same sale is a set of six early Victorian dining chairs with curved "tablet" horizontal top rails: estimate £1,000-£1,500.

Estimates for tables in the sale are typically £1,200-£1,800. At Christie's South Kensington's furniture sale next week, estimates for Victorian extendable tables are in the £1,500-£2,500 range and sets of six late Victorian chairs from £800.

Early mahogany has survived the recession rather well: the Antique Collectors Club index shows a peak index of 3,265 in 1989, dropping to a low of 2,529 last year: it is now 2,976.

Stewart Whittington, of the furniture dealers Norman Adams, an exhibitor at the BADA fair, emphasises the staying power of the market. "Furniture is the last thing people sell," he says. "You're really bust when you sell your furniture."

**BADA Antiques Fair, The Duke of York's Headquarters, Cheltenham Terrace, London SW3, 12-18 March, entry £10 (0171-589 6108); Bonhams Knightsbridge dining room sale, Tuesday, 2pm (0171-393 3900); Bonhams weekly sales: Lots Road, Chelsea, alternately Wednesdays, 1pm and Tuesdays, noon (0171-393 3937); Christie's South Kensington weekly sales, Wednesdays, 10.30am (0171-581 7611); Lots Road Galleries weekly sale, Mondays, 6pm (0171-351 7771)**



Sitting pretty: at Peter Lipitch's shop in Fulham Road, west London - a Regency mahogany pillar table priced £32,500 that will not be going to the BADA fair. Tables this size, 11ft long, are too big for the stands

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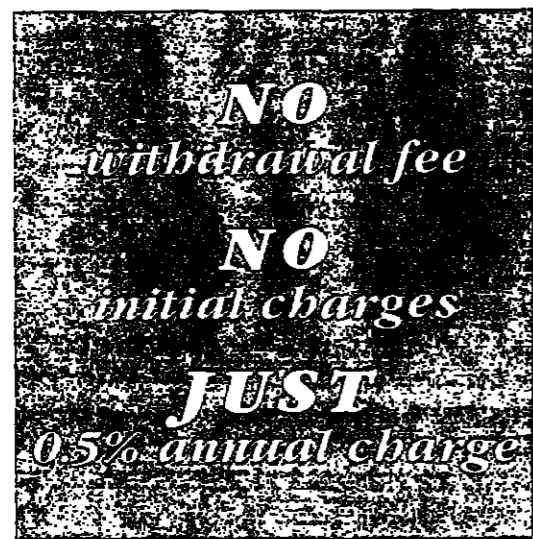
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Nic Cicutti

Paying tax to fund decent pensions is a burden we should bear

It was John Major who described the Government's new proposals to privatise the basic state pension as "not an election-winner". Loath as I am to agree with the Prime Minister, I suspect he is right on this one.

When the current generation of taxpayers realise what they may be required to pay in return for a series of guesstimated savings in 45 years' time, they may find even less reason to vote Conservative than they might have.

There is no question that state pensions need reforming. For more than 15 years, the dream of an adequate state-funded retirement has been whittled away.

In 1980, it was possible to dream of a pension that might equal 45 per cent of average earnings. Today, state retirement payouts will barely make 25 per cent for a small minority, and this will tumble over the next 30 years.

So, we need to reform the system. But privatisation?

Peter Lilley, the Social Security Minister, paints a sunny picture 50 years hence, when today's teenagers can retire on pensions worth

£175 a week. Most of this will be paid for by minor but continuing improvements in economic growth over the same period.

What happens if that economic growth is not forthcoming and we face a repeat of the recessions in the 1970s and 1980s? Could any government guarantee it can pay £9 a week into young people's personal pensions? And what if investment performance does not match expectations: who funds the guaranteed minimum pension? Actually, we will. In fact, we will be paying up to £7bn a year extra until the hoped-for benefits kick in in 2040.

So, what is the answer? Ultimately, I believe there is no alternative but to accept that one of our society's obligations is to pay its elderly population enough for them not to live in penury. Such an obligation may mean higher taxes for some people. But it is better than relying on market vagaries.

Young people need a vision of a decent society they can contribute to. Knowing they will be cared for when they are old is part of that vision.

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# Changes that will affect us all

Nic Cicutti on plans to reform the state pension system

Why is the Government reforming the state pension system?

The number of people of pensionable age will rise from 8.9 million in 1991 to 13.5 million by 2030. Meanwhile, there will be a falling proportion of people in work to support them.

How are pensions affected? The state pension scheme, funded by National Insurance Contributions (NICs), is a Pay-As-You-Go system. We pay for those who are already retired. In turn, we hope our pensions will be met by future NICs. If fewer people are in work, it costs more to fund pensions. This either means higher taxes or smaller pensions.

What is the Government doing?

Over the past 15 years, the Government has cut the real value of state pensions. This has mainly been done by linking benefits to inflation rather than earnings, which rise faster. The change has been applied to the state pension and to the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme (SERPS), introduced by Labour in 1978.

The original aim had been that the basic state pension plus Serps, which requires 20 years' earnings for a maximum payout, would make up to 45 per cent of an average wage. When the maximum Serps becomes payable next year, 20 years after being introduced, it is likely that the maximum state pension will be about 35 per cent of the average wage. This will fall to about 20 per cent by 2020.

The Government has encouraged people to opt out of Serps by paying generous "rebates" either into company pension schemes or personal pensions.

What is the latest change?

Peter Lilley, Social Security Minister, is proposing to abolish Serps and pay a flat-rate rebate of 5 per cent of earnings into people's personal pensions instead.

He also wants to scrap the basic state pension, now worth about £61 a week, replacing it with a guaranteed £9-a-week payment into a personal pension while people are in work.

The theory is that by doing so, we will move away from Pay-As-You-Go towards a pre-

funded pension system, run by the private sector. The personal pension would give a better payout at retirement, claims Mr Lilley. If a fund underperformed, the state guarantees a minimum pension. Meanwhile, he hopes to cut the state's pension bill by £40bn to £10bn or so by 2040.

Will I be affected?

Probably not. People in their late 20s would continue as now. Those affected are today's teenagers, who would come under the new regime in the next five years.

Is there anything wrong with the proposal?

There could be. One must wonder whether anyone can guarantee to meet a promise to pay £9 a week forever into a youngster's pension plan.

Second, Mr Lilley has said the scheme will pay for itself because payments into personal pensions won't receive tax relief as they do at present – although the pensions themselves won't be taxed, he promises. But minimum state pensions aren't taxed at the moment. And which cash-strapped Government could

resist a bite out of people's retirement income in 40 years' time, when memories of today's promises have faded?

But if only young people are affected and I'm not, what does it matter?

The main impact for the rest of us will be in the area of public finance. In other words – taxes. The DSS claims the cost of the changes will rise by £160m a year, reaching £7bn by 2040. It hopes the extra bill will be paid by better economic performance. But if something goes wrong, today's taxpayers will end up paying for those already retired, for their own retirement, plus the retirement of those younger than themselves.

Will these proposals ever see the light of day?

Highly unlikely, unless a miracle puts John Major back into 10 Downing Street. Their main effect, however, has been to focus attention on the issue. Labour's knee-jerk hostility to the plan is only the beginning of what should be a much more serious debate over the future funding of state pensions.

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## John Whiting assesses the benefits of company cars as eco-friendly policies tax drivers

This article is about transportation. No, not the relative merits of fleeing the country as a tax avoidance measure. Instead, we will look at the impact of tax on transport.

The Government has reminded us that if we prefer the comfort of a car to an overcrowded public transport system, our tax bills are going to increase. Car users are an acceptable target for Government tax increases – like smokers, we know we should try harder to do without and accept paying a bit extra for the "pleasure". And yet the car remains a widely used employee benefit – so, with cash now frequently offered as an alternative can you be sure that you're getting your money's worth out of a company car? And what other transport falls into the taxman's grasp? For those with a company car, the basic taxable benefit is calculated as 35 per cent of the list price of the car, including VAT, plus the cost of any extras. This benefit figure is reduced by a third if the business mileage (which doesn't include home to work travel, of course) is

between 2,500 and 18,000 miles in a tax year, and by two thirds if it is over 18,000. The resulting figure can then be reduced by another third if the car is more than four years old at the year-end. If your employer also pays for your private fuel there is a fixed fuel benefit dependent on the size of the engine – so it may be worth considering a nippy 1.4 litre car rather than a gas-guzzling 3 litre. This flat rate applies for any amount of private fuel received in the year – so check whether you should pay back the entire cost of any private fuel, particularly if you do low mileage. On the other hand, a 40 per cent taxpayer with a big car only has to use more than £11.50 worth of private fuel per week in the coming year to make it a benefit worth having. It is perhaps indicative of the Government's view on company cars that private fuel benefit saw a 12.5 per cent rise in the Budget. So is it worth having a company car or should you just take the cash alternative and hop on your bike? They still have their attractions –

even a high taxable benefit is arguably worth it for the liberation from the hassle of insurance, repairs and road tax. And while the fuel tax benefit is increasing, it is still a valuable perk in the right circumstances. Those without a company car, but who use their own car for business travel can look to the Fixed Profit Car Scheme. This is an attempt to do away with the detailed claims for business mileage in a private car. Any reimbursement made to you will not be taxable as a benefit providing it is within Inland Revenue designated limits as an example, 35p per mile for a 1500cc car. (The figures always get lower once you have claimed for over 4,000 miles in a year.) Nowadays, if your employer pays you less than these designated amounts for business mileage you can claim the difference as a deduction from your taxable income. What about other types of business travel? Most of it will be for business purposes, with no benefit resulting. But if your company pays for a flight to Australia and the only business pur-

pose is a couple of drinks with your colleagues in the Sydney office you may run into tax problems as well as jet lag. There are still those who take a break from the hectic corporate whirl to use transport for pleasure. Again the car is under attack from the taxman with rising petrol costs (up 14p per gallon in 1997/98) and increases in vehicle excise duty. Then there is the doubling of Air Passenger Duty from 1 November – £10 within Europe and £20 outside – plus a rise in Insurance Premium Tax to 4 per cent on sales of travel insurance. This can go up to 17.5 per cent if the insurance is bought with your travel package. A change of Government might bring added pressures, with higher car benefits taxes, more eco-friendly measures generally and tax on the provision of car parking spaces by the office. Might we see chief executives being chauffeured by tandem to their city offices? John Whiting is a tax partner at Price Waterhouse

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# A yen to get into Japan?

Choosing the right sector is the secret to picking funds, writes Simon Read

Investment is not an exact science but investors can reduce the odds to their benefit by picking funds which are likely to meet their investment goals. There are more than 1,500 unit trusts to choose from, for instance, but the choice can be cut by picking a fund sector.

Funds are classified in 24 different sectors, which are defined by the industry's trade body, the Association of Unit Trust and Investment Funds (Auitf). Within some sectors there may be just a handful of funds, while others consist of hundreds.

All the funds in a sector have similar investment activity or areas of operation – for example investing in fixed-income stock or companies in the Far East.

The two most popular sectors – those attracting most investment – in recent months are UK Gilt and Fixed Interest, and UK Growth and Income, while the two least popular are Japan and North America. Unsurprisingly, the most popular sectors tend to be better performers while the poor performers are the least sought-after. There are wide variations in the performance and potential investors would be wise to do a lot of homework before handing over their cash.

To illustrate this we can look at two different fund managers which each have top-performing funds in the top-performing sector – UK Smaller Companies – and among the worst-performing funds in the

worst performing sector – Japan. The Gartmore UK Smaller Companies fund is the top performer over one and three years according to HSW, a specialist firm of fund analysts, while Schroder's Smaller Companies fund is third in its sector over one year. At the other end of the scale Gartmore's Japan fund is 78th out of 90 in its sector over one year, while the Schroder Japanese Enterprise fund is 86th out of 90.

So, why is there such a difference between funds from the same fund management houses? A lot is to do with market and economic conditions, of course. The UK has been going through a period of recovery and small firms have benefited from that.

Meanwhile Japan has been going through very tough economic times. At the turn of the decade the positions were almost exactly reversed.

But to understand the differences between the four funds in the two different sectors, you need to look at their individual investment objectives. Gartmore's UK Smaller Companies fund "is designed to provide investors with above-average capital growth from a portfolio of carefully selected shares of smaller companies quoted on the UK stock market. The income yield is considered to be of lesser importance."

Not surprisingly, Schroder's Smaller Companies fund has much the same stated objective: "To achieve capital growth



Changing its tune: Japan has had a tough economic time but is recovering PHOTOGRAPH: REUTERS

through investment in UK smaller companies. The fund will invest in smaller companies with the prospect of above-average growth potential. Income is of secondary importance."

Compare that with the stated objective of the Schroder Japanese Enterprise fund: "To achieve capital growth through investment in Japanese companies. The fund will follow a highly active investment policy with emphasis being placed on aggressive switching between sectors and a concentrated approach to stock selection. The relatively small number of stocks held will be in established Japanese companies with a proven record which offer the prospect of above-average capital growth."

There's not much long-term investing going on there, clearly.

But this is in response to a sluggish market where aggressiveness is practically the only way to make money. The Gartmore Japan fund adopts a similar approach: "The fund is designed to provide investors with long-term capital growth from an actively managed portfolio of investments in Japan. The income yield is considered to be of secondary importance and is likely to be minimal."

The key words are "actively managed". Looking a little closer at sectors can reveal much, and is a particularly useful way of finding a match for your own investment strategy. Choosing sectors simply on the basis of historical information could be a mistake, however.

While the UK Smaller Companies sector is currently a high-flyer,

it hasn't always been so, and history is littered with investors who've lost almost everything backing the potential of small firms. Conversely while Japan is bottom of the pile now, it wasn't always the case and there have been plenty of profits to be made in the country in the past.

Now could be a good time to be thinking about getting into Japan, according to John Kelly, investment director at Barclays Unicorn, whose Japan fund is among the worst six performers of all funds over five years. "We are optimistic about Japan," he says. "After a very extended period of adjustment, it is coming right. Japan had a period of excess growth and has to adjust to that. The pace of recovery is very slow but things are gently getting better."

# An investment you can trust in

Ken Welsby charts the history behind managed funds

Next time you see a report about rail privatisation, remember that it was the fortunes made and lost in last century's "railway mania" that led directly to the birth and growth of the fund management industry.

Stock market speculation – mainly in railways, but also in what we would now call emerging markets – reached fever pitch in the 1840s and 1850s. And like most such bubbles, it duly burst, leaving investors ruined and angry.

In response, a group of City financiers decided on a new and more responsible approach to investment, and in 1862 the Foreign & Colonial Government Trust was formed to invest in a portfolio of overseas government stock.

Foreign & Colonial is still very much in business today – as a fund management group which looks after £26.7bn of people's savings. And as its chief executive, the Hon James Ogilvy, points out: "Many of the countries in which we invested more than 100 years ago are countries in which we still invest today."

"In those days, of course, the investment was fixed-interest stock, rather than shares – but if you look at our portfolio from the 1880s you can see countries such as Colombia, Egypt, Turkey and India – places which are now fashionable as emerging markets."

The hallmark of the early F&C Trust was diversification – reducing risk by spreading investment rather than concentrating on a few stocks – and that is still the main reason to invest in managed funds today.

The early fund management vehicles were mostly investment trusts. These are companies in which you invest by buying shares in the same way as investing in any other kind of company. The only difference is that instead of making widgets, their sole business is investing in other businesses – and today their combined assets are worth more than £50bn.

Then, in the 1930s, along came the Municipal and General, an investment company which imported an American idea into Britain: the mutual fund. Or, as we know it on this side of the Atlantic, the unit trust.

After a slow start, the idea took off in post-war years and now accounts for some £120bn in long-term savings.

At the outset, Municipal and General had just a few hundred investors. Today, known as M&G, its unit trusts are owned by more than 800,000 people and its total funds are worth more than £15bn.

Several of the big names in fund management are now part of high street banking groups.

Gartmore, one of the top five investment managers – savings and pensions worth £51bn – was acquired by NatWest last year. It now forms part of the bank's "wealth management group" alongside NatWest Life and Coutts, the private bank.

Similarly, customers of Lloyds Bank who want to keep their long-term savings within the group need look no further than Hill Samuel Asset Management. Since it sells mainly through independent financial advisers, HSAM is less well known than some of its competitors, but its funds include the Hill Samuel Emerging Companies unit trust, which has been the top performer over the past five years.

Some of the most successful fund management businesses have been spin-offs from old-established City houses. Guinness Flight – which this week announced plans to merge its fund management business with that of Hambros – began as the mutual fund arm of Guinness Mahon, a merchant bank with its roots dating back to 1836.

Although Guinness Flight is not in the big league of fund managers – assets of "only" £2bn – it is highly regarded for its performance and innovation, thanks to a small, specialist team led by the two founders and joint managing directors, Howard Flight and Timothy Guinness.

In recent years fund managers' ranks have been joined by a number of newcomers, of which the best-known is undoubtedly Virgin. In just two years, Virgin Direct has attracted more than 100,000 customers and £500m into its managed F&P, marketed on the brand name, strong performance and low charges, which have set a new benchmark for the industry.

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# Splash out overseas

Almost 20 per cent of potential investors say the fear of an incoming Labour government is making them steer clear of personal equity plans (PEPs), according to research.

Around 1.8 million people said they were likely to invest in a 1996/97 PEP before the deadline, but a sizeable minority remained worried by Labour, according to a poll carried out for Templeton Investment Management.

Investors nervous about the election and its possible consequences could start investing overseas. That doesn't mean putting cash in dodgy tax shelters, but looking at the potential of high returns by investing in foreign markets.

Admittedly, you need to be a little more adventurous in your investment outlook, but if you've already got a portfolio of a reasonable size then it makes sense to diversify abroad. Of the £6,000 which you can invest each year in a general PEP, up to £1,500 can

## Simon Read reports on the best ways to invest abroad

go into what are known as non-qualifying investments – those outside the European Union. This means the exciting world of global markets, from established countries such as America and Japan to emerging areas such as Malaysia and Latin America, is available for investment opportunities.

If you want to get the tax advantages of a PEP for your overseas investment, however, you must invest your £1,500 in countries with stock exchanges which are recognised by the Inland Revenue. This means that countries such as Brazil and Mexico are in, while Chile and China are out.

If you're a reasonably novice investor, it may be much safer to stick to markets you under-

stand. These days it's easy to add some extra spice to your PEP portfolio by using your non-qualifying investments allowance.

Several providers, including Fidelity, GT and Prolific, have set up package deals for you to get abroad easily. Of course, you don't have to limit yourself to investing in funds within a PEP. The returns on an investment in an overseas unit trust could far outweigh the lost tax benefits of not being able to shelter your investment in a PEP.

Picking an overseas market is a difficult choice. If you think political conditions in the UK are turbulent, look at Latin America. One of the world's traditional political hot spots, the continent is famed for dictatorships, revolutions and internal strife – and often the only financial certainty is that corruption is rife.

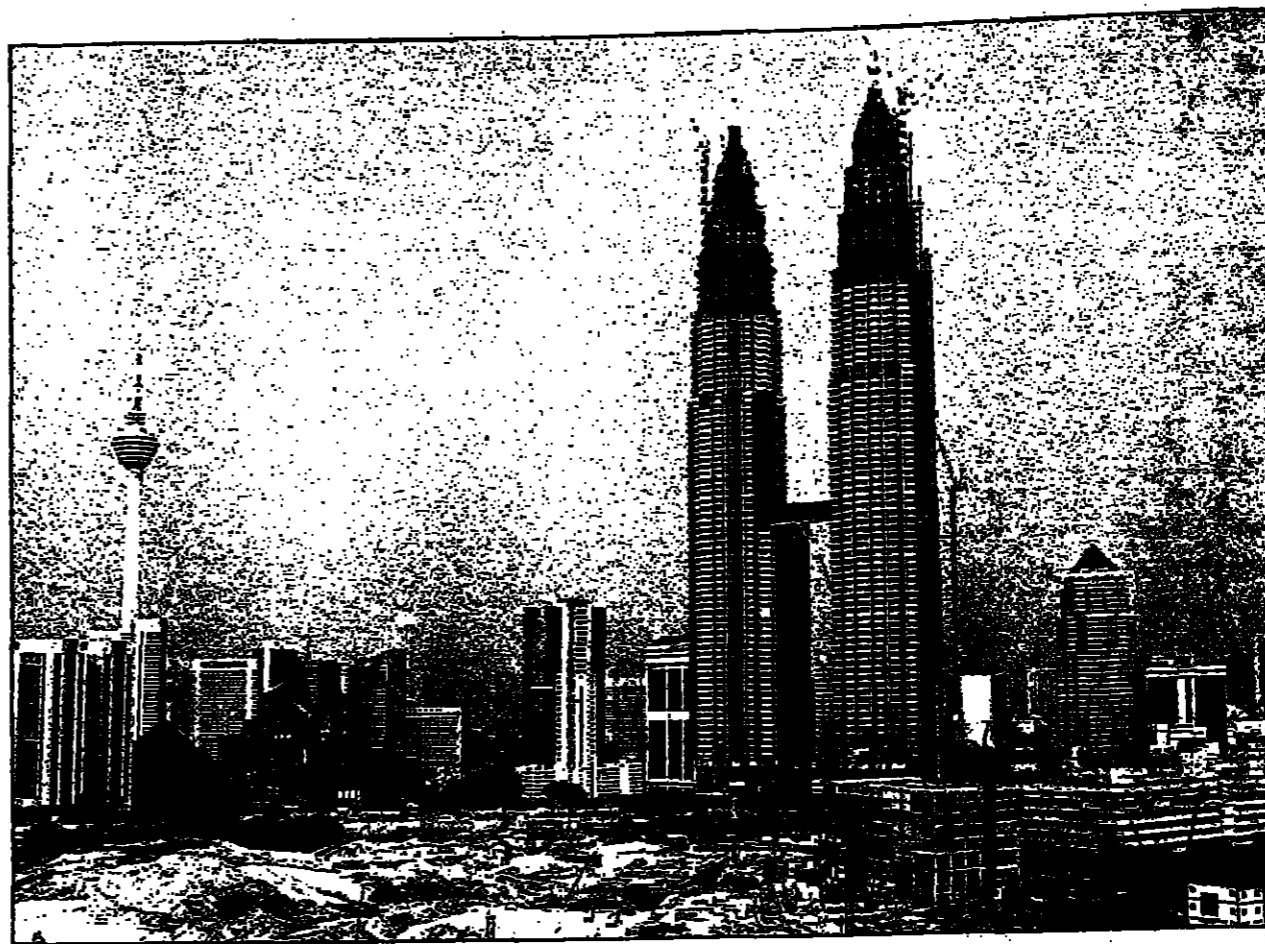
It is a background which has seen rampant inflation, most notably in Brazil where, in the past three decades, inflation

has frequently been measured in hundreds or even thousands of percentage points.

It is not an area for the nervous investor. On the other hand, you probably don't want to miss out on the potential. An international growth fund could give you exposure in many different international markets. There are around 200 international growth funds from which to choose.

The top performers over five years are Prolific Technology, Save & Prosper Growth, and Britannia International Special Opportunities. Two of these funds are specialist funds which require a greater degree of confidence. But most fund managers will have a general fund investing in international growth.

Of course, you could go closer to home and just look at European opportunities. But it would seem to shame to make the move beyond these shores without exploring the wider world of investment opportunities.



Emerging market: investors can now put their money to work in areas such as Malaysia

PHOTOGRAPH: REUTERS

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Investors Chronicle  
24th January 1997

There is a spread between the buying and selling price.

\*The estimated redemption yield on The M&G Corporate Bond PEP was 6.6% as at 28th February 1997. At that date the estimated gross distribution yield was 7.0%.

## It's time for a PEP talk

### Top 10 Unit Trusts

Hill Sam UK Emerging Cos	240.72	UK Smaller Companies
Jupiter Income	226.16	UK Equity Income
Old Mutual European	215.82	Europe
Jupiter European	213.35	Europe
BWD UK Smaller Co's	202.37	UK Smaller Companies
INVESTCO European Growth	194.89	Europe
Thornston UK Smaller Cos	191.78	UK Smaller Companies
Fidelity Recovery	184.11	UK Growth
Henderson European Value	183.60	Europe
Jupiter UK Growth	180.58	UK Growth

These plans must be organised by 5 April, warns Neil Baker

With the end of the tax year looming, time is running out for people who want to invest in a tax-free personal equity plan (PEP).

Each year every adult is allowed to invest up to £9,000 through a PEP, which means any money you make comes free of income tax or capital gains tax. Up to £6,000 can be put into a general PEP and the remaining £3,000 can be invested in a single-company PEP, which invests in the shares of just one company.

If you don't make use of your PEP allowance, you can't carry it over into the following tax year. Also, you can't put any more money in once the tax year has finished, although any income your PEP generates can be reinvested.

The structure is flexible. All PEPs have to be organised by a plan manager approved by the Inland Revenue. With some PEPs that manager will make all the investment decisions while with others you can phone the manager up and tell him or her which shares to buy and which ones to sell. It depends on how highly you rate your investment skills and how much time you have.

With the most common type of plan the manager will put your money into one or more unit or investment trusts. These are collective vehicles which pool investors' money to buy shares.

Different unit trusts are managed to achieve different aims – they might go for good capital growth, high income, focus on small companies or just make sure they own all of the shares in the FTSE 100. Most PEP managers will be able to put your money into a few different types of fund.

Some trusts are designated as non-qualifying funds because they have more than 50 per cent of their assets invested outside the UK or European Union. They are popular with investors who

think they can make gains from overseas share markets. You can put only £1,500 of your PEP allowance into these funds. The remaining £4,500 can go into a regular qualifying fund but the investment must be made by the same PEP plan manager.

Other PEPs don't invest in equities at all. So-called corporate-bond PEPs invest in debt certificates and preference shares issued by companies. These are generally aimed at investors who want to generate income, not build up their capital. Tracker-fund PEPs, such as the one recently offered by GA Life, will try to mirror the performance of the FTSE 100 share index, or a combination of other indices, including the S&P 500 in the United States.

If you want to make use of your allowance this year, your money must be paid over by the end of the tax year on 5 April. It is not enough to simply agree to pay the money. Because this year 5 April is a Saturday, there is even less time available than normal.

But investing in a PEP is a serious business which shouldn't be rushed into at the last minute, especially for first-time investors. The undoubted tax advantages of a PEP account for nothing if, in the pre-election and pre-5 April panic, you invest in the wrong fund, which then falls through the floor. There are a lot of different PEPs available and all the options should be considered, including fund management charges. As a rule of thumb, more than 5 per cent initial charges, or annual management fees higher than 1.5 per cent, are too much.

The Independent has produced a free guide to PEPs. The 32-page guide, sponsored by GA Life, a leading life insurer, is available by calling 0500 125888 or by filling in the coupon below. Copies will take about 10 days to arrive.

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# The people with billions at their fingertips

## Three fund managers explain what they look for when selecting stocks

Radhika Ajmera  
Abtrust

The City has a reputation as a community dominated by men in grey suits. It is a reputation that's finally starting to change - and fund management is one area where the pace of change has been faster than most, writes Ken Wicks.

That's because success in fund management depends on performance, rather than the old boys' network and increasing numbers of women are carving out successful careers

in the industry. A few of them, like "superman" Nicola Horlick, make headlines. Most simply get on with their jobs - and firmly in this category comes Radhika Ajmera, who leads a team of 10 fund managers covering emerging markets at Abtrust.

The company began life as Aberdeen Trust, financing 19th century Scottish colonial development in Canada and elsewhere. Today it's a more broadly based fund management group with a strong international bias and partic-

ular emphasis on emerging markets.

Investing in emerging markets means fund managers must go beyond simply looking at a company's financial track record. "Company visits are essential," says Ms Ajmera. "Accounting standards vary so widely that we have to go behind the figures, meet and talk with the people and see the business for ourselves."

"Whenever possible we want to visit the plant or facilities, not simply meet the management. We never invest in a company which we haven't visited and last year, between the 10 of us, we visited more than 1,000 companies in different parts of the world."

In addition to her team management role, her individual responsibilities include the Turkey Trust, an investment trust which invests in shares listed on the Istanbul Stock Exchange.

It's a market which has experienced some uncertainty over the years, but one which has recently rallied sharply as legal hurdles to the government's privatisation programme have been overcome.

Although Ms Ajmera has a demanding job, she insists on finding time for "real life" away from work. "You know what they say about all work and no play - it would not be a life. It would just be existence."

Richard Hughes  
M&G

Former chancellor Nigel Lawson has come in for criticism for taking a reported £250,000 for promoting M&G PEPs and some people say they have been put off investing with the company because they don't trust him, writes Simon Read.

But allowing such prejudices to cloud their judgement could be a mistake. For behind the slimmer, new-look Lord Lawson you'll find a team of committed fund managers.

Typical is Richard Hughes, head of UK equities, who looks after M&G's £1.4bn Recovery Fund. The 39-year-old former local authority accountant has been with M&G for 10 years, and is only the second manager of the fund in its 28-year life.

He deals in what are often called "turnaround stocks" - companies which may have experienced a fall in profits or change of management and which are in a state of flux.



Taking a gamble: Radhika Ajmera, Richard Hughes (centre) and Andrew Jackson are aware of the risks involved with their investments

"What I'm looking for is the quality of the underlying business and the potential for the future," he says.

Mr Hughes' expertise has led him to invest in several winners for his 140,000 unit-holders. Take Midland Bank, for instance: "We bought a big holding throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s which was disappointing to begin with. But when the bids for the bank came in from Lloyds and HSBC Holdings, the stock turned out to be a wonderful investment."

Other recent highlights

include Granada, Asda, Storehouse and Burtons. "These are all household names which anyone could have invested in," explains Mr Hughes. "But the trick is to identify where there's a real possibility of a turnaround. Our average length of holding is over five years, which gives time for the stock market to recognise the recovery of the stock."

Andrew Jackson  
Hill Samuel

Running the £218m Hill Samuel Emerging Companies

unit trust and its companion investment trust has given Andrew Jackson a lot of pleasure since he took the job last May, writes Tony Lyons.

This top-performing fund specialises in smaller companies and has a clear investment strategy which starts with a "top down" look at the economy to highlight the likely top performing sectors.

Once this is decided, Mr Jackson and his team do their own research to pick companies which they think will do well over the long term.

"We are looking for those

which will make us money over the long term," he says. "Small company investment is about capital growth."

Originally, the unit trust invested in companies with a market capitalisation of under £50m, but as the fund got larger, it found it difficult to find stocks it wanted to buy. Today, it looks at companies under £250m.

The investment strategy tells the team that 1997 will see a continuation of last year's consumer boom, fuelled by building society demutualisations, falling unemployment

and economic growth. "This tells us to look at retailing, leisure, selected housing stocks, and other household shares such as private motor-ing," he says.

Mr Jackson became interested in the City during a work placement in a company treasury department as part of his business studies degree at Hatfield Polytechnic.

He intends running smaller company funds for a long time. "You have more chance of finding a star performer among smaller companies although there are more risks."

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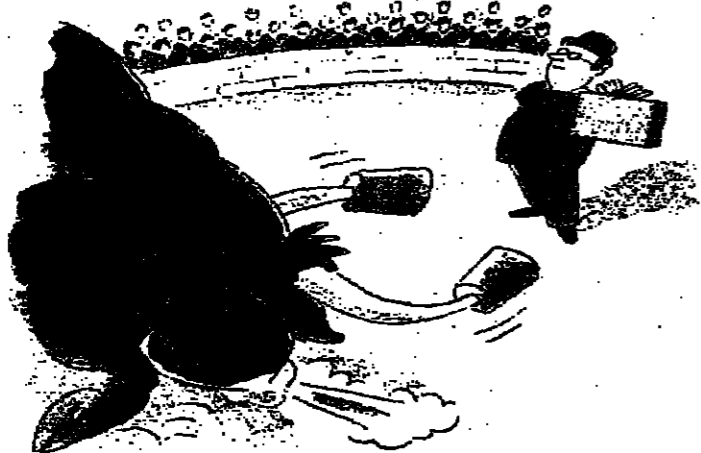
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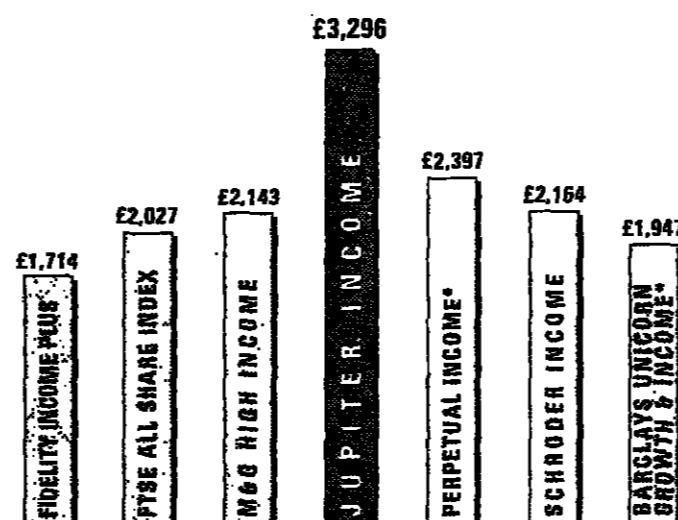
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# Not all PEPs are equal

Abigail Montrose on the options for people who receive windfalls

If you are one of the 16 million people who will receive building society windfall shares this summer, you should start thinking now about what you want to do with the shares. Many people will want to keep them and the most tax-

efficient way to do this is in a PEP. Thanks to a ruling by the Inland Revenue, investors who receive free shares from several demutualisations will be able to shelter these shares in a general PEP on top of their annual £6,000 general PEP allowance.

Investors may also decide to open a single-company PEP for their shares, up to a £3,000 limit. All the building societies which are converting to banks are likely to offer single-company PEPs to their shareholders. But as you can only put one company's shares in this type of PEP, if you are expecting shares from more than one building society this will not be appropriate.

Those expecting windfalls from more than one building society could shelter all the shares in a self-select PEP. But you will not be allowed to do this if you already have a general PEP, as you can only have one general PEP each tax year. Moreover, with a self-select PEP, you would be unable to then have a separate general PEP in addition to the self-select one you are sheltering the shares in.

So if you already plan to have a general PEP in the 1997/98 tax year and are expecting several lots of wind-

fall shares, the best place to shelter them is in there. Someone who receives £1,000 of shares when Alliance & Leicester, Halifax, Northern Rock and Woolwich demutualise could put all these shares into their PEP on top of their £6,000 allowance. This in effect would enable the investor to shelter £10,000 of shares in their PEP for the 1997/98 tax year.

Several of the large PEP providers, including Perpetual, M&G, Schroders, Barclays and Mercury, have already said that they will allow their general PEP

investors to shelter their windfall shares in their PEPs.

Paul Ashby, marketing manager at Barclays, believes it is only fair to tell investors before the beginning of the new tax year if they will be allowed to shelter these shares in their PEP. "If we don't offer this service, investors who invested their 1997/98 PEP allowance with us would find when they received their windfall shares in the summer they could not PEP them. By allowing them to shelter these shares in our general PEP this avoids the problem," he says.

Other PEP providers are

allowing investors to temporarily shelter their windfall shares in their PEP. For example, Fidelity will take the shares into its PEP but they must then be cashed in and the money used to buy additional units in Fidelity's unit trust PEP Save & Prosper offers a similar facility. The advantage of these schemes is that you can increase the amount you are allowed to invest in your PEP from £6,000 to £6,000 plus the sum at which your windfall shares are sold.

Many PEP providers are looking into what facility, if any, they will offer PEP

investors with windfall shares.

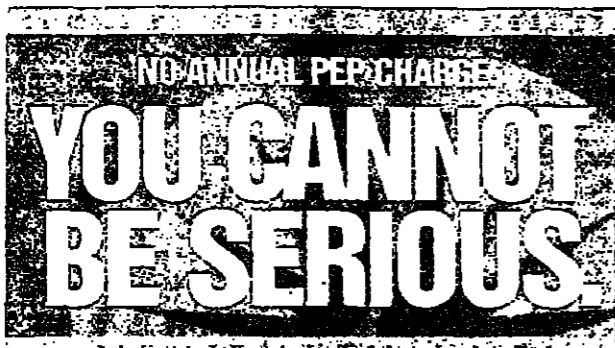
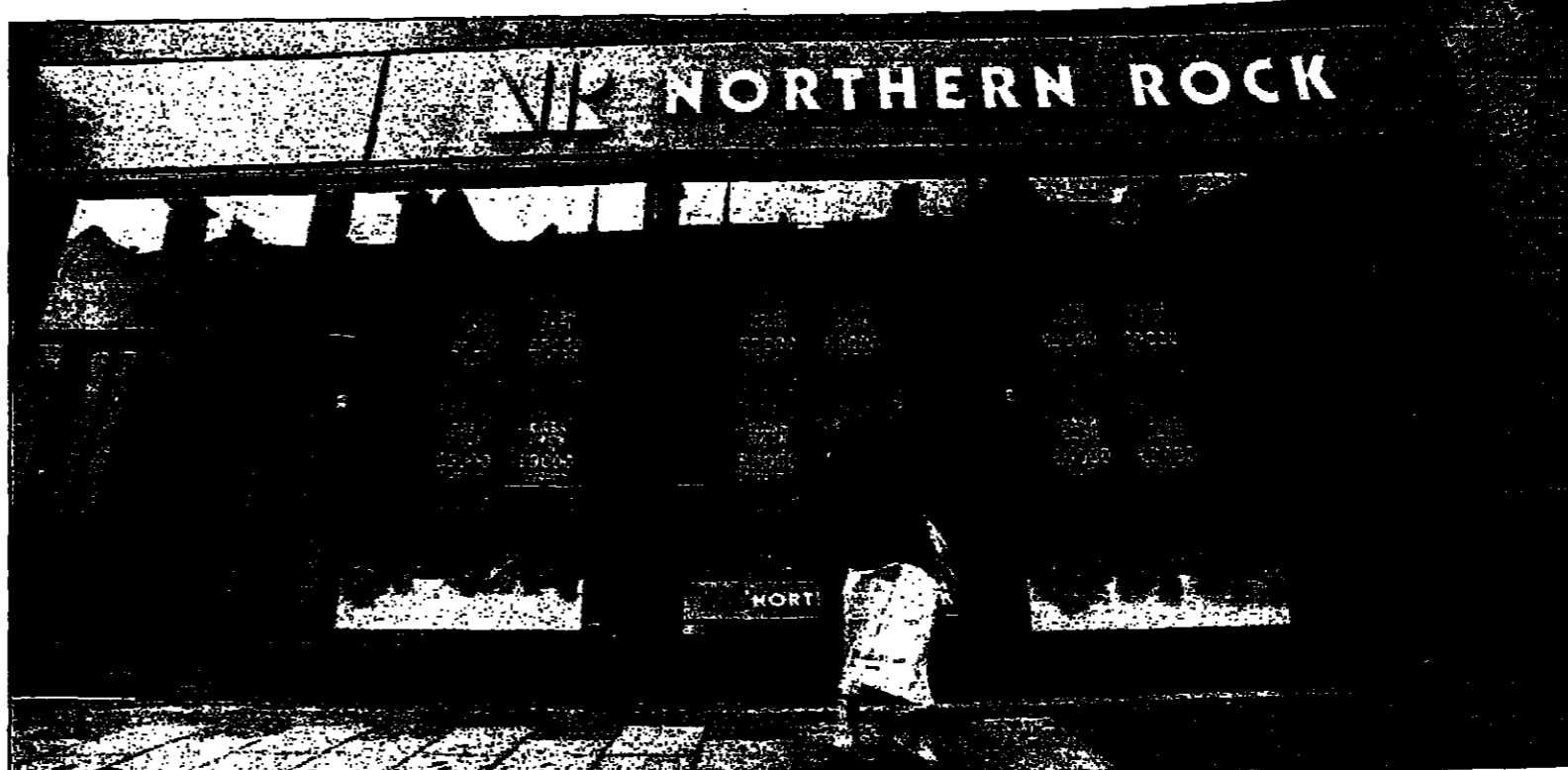
Lloyds Bank hopes to offer investors the facility to place windfall shares into all its PEPs and will announce its decision before the end of the tax year. Virgin and TSB are looking into the possibility of offering this facility and hope to make an announcement before the start of the next tax year.

If you want to be sure that you will be able to place any windfall shares in your PEP, contact your provider to find out what arrangements it has made. M&G's Rachel Medill says: "To be sure that they can get all their bonus shares into

a tax-free environment, investors looking for a 1997/98 PEP should choose a general PEP that will allow holding of individual shares in institutions which are coming to the stock market."

You can only have one PEP manager each tax year. So if you discover after 6 April that your PEP provider will not allow you to put any windfall shares in your PEP, it will be too late to start a new PEP.

If you plan to put your shares into a PEP, ask for a share certificate and put the shares into your PEP within 42 days of receipt.



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## Don't be fazed about London stock markets

Investors who expect a crash should put their PEPs to work in Europe, writes Ken Welsby

If you are nervous about the prospects for the London stock market, consider a phased PEP which will spread its investment over several months.

That is the latest advice from a number of IFAs. "There are really two issues but they both have the same effect," says Colin Beavan of Chew Valley Financial Services in Bristol.

"The market is close to a record high, so there could be a correction soon, and there is added uncer-

tainty about the election and what that might mean."

So if people want to take advantage of this year's PEP tax allowance, one of the things to consider is a phased PEP. You put all of your cash into the plan before the end of the tax year, but it is invested in the market over several months, so reducing the risk.

This is quite different from a savings plan in which you make monthly payments, since any contributions after 5 April would not

qualify for this year's tax allowance.

One phased scheme is offered by NPL, while another on similar lines is from New Directions, marketed through the DBS network of independent financial advisers.

Both of these can be attractive in present circumstances, says Jane Caudle, of Raynes Park, London, who also suggests diversifying away from the UK stock market.

She says: "The PEP rules say, in simple terms, that 75 per cent of the plan must be invested in Euro-

pean stock markets. So a number of fund managers such as Newton are now starting to promote plans which put 75 per cent of your money into European funds and the rest into the Far East."

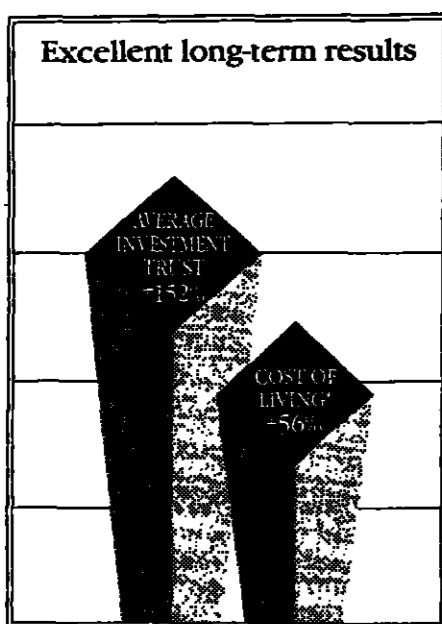
Mr Beavan agrees: "Since continental markets are at different stages of the economic cycle, they can be quite attractive to investors. It's not always the easiest concept for people to understand."

A variation on this theme is put forward by Colin Chalmers in

Leeds: "A lot of couples forget that they can each have a PEP every year. So what we are saying to people is that one partner can concentrate on UK funds while the other goes into Europe and the Pacific Rim."

"Couples who are investing the maximum every year – typically people running small businesses who are using their PEPs for retirement savings – can alternate from year to year, so that their portfolios are broadly balanced."

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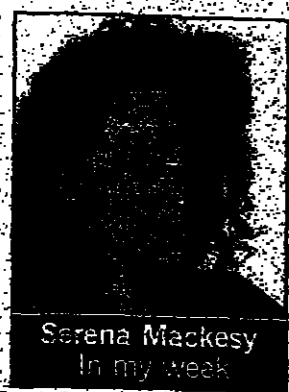
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In my week

Crufts should have a few people classes to relieve the serious job of judging the canines: skinny girls with curly perms, fierce women in brogues...

Eds stands at the back of the crowd with a carrier-bag full of crunchy meat-flavoured filler foods. We are watching the slow parade of the long-haired dachshunds. Eds pronounces it "dash-und" and I pronounce it "daks-unt" and we each fix the other with a challenging eye every time the word comes out. "It's weird," he says, after the furry red snappers have weddled, huge eyes fixed on their mistresses' faces, round the patch of green felt laid out for the judging, "they're all the same shape."

I do one of those eyes-upwards head waggles that nine-year-old boys are so keen on. "That," I reply, "is because they're all the same breed." He waggles his head back. "No, stupid, I mean the women." I look more closely. It's true: everyone showing a dachshund today comes up to my shoulder, has thin legs, bare shoulders, and floral swimming-cap hairdos. They favour suits and skirt-sets, all of which seem to be rounded off by American Tan tights and bright, white trainers. "They're all wearing the same clothes," "Mmmm," Eds heads for the Borzoi ring. "They're very much of a breed."

Dog owners don't so much resemble their pets as look like each other. Crufts should have a few people classes to relieve the serious job of judging the canines: skinny girls with curly perms, fierce women in brogues, shiniest suit, best jumper. Their behaviour varies from breed to breed as well: the toy dog owners conduct their business in steely silence, glaring disapprovingly at each other over their wire cages. The areas for huge dogs - Borzois, Afghans, wolfhounds, deerhounds - are more cocktail party in atmosphere, with knots of jolly laughter and exchanged gossip. The obedience ring, with its sign saying "It's Down 2 Stand 3 Sit 4 Down 5 Sit 6 Stand", so that the dogs who can read can cheat, is lined with people in T-shirts and ski-pants, eating foil-wrapped sandwiches and drinking tea out of thermoses.

The Staffordshire bull terrier owners are the best. Staffs are, of course, the dog of choice for fighting matches around the Birmingham area, and they've all come out to the National Exhibition Centre to scare the living daylights out of the other owners. Strolling Greg Charles Spaniel people drop their eyes and speed up as they walk through their holding area, as though they have suddenly found themselves in a dark alley late at night. "To a man, the Staffs have No 2 slipper haircuts, tattoos and the old-fashioned clucked in their paws. And they're eating hot

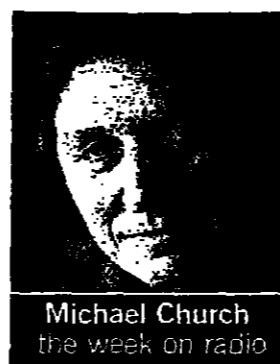


want to give those things to your dog, but I guess I'm just not a dog-lover."

Eds finds a copy of one of those large-circulation magazines you never knew existed, *Obedience Competitor*, the magazine for dog dos and don'ts. We speculate about its readership. "Do you think you get paws buying it by mistake?" he says. "Naah. They buy it for the small ads." Submissive puppy seeks stern master. "Mmm. British bulldog seeks hot bitch with choke chain. The car-sticker stall has gone overboard to milk the market. Every breed is represented in the style of those 'baby on board' stickers which their owners believe proclaim their fertility and all other drivers interpret as meaning 'Expect erratic driving because I haven't had any sleep and I will be looking over my shoulder to try and find the dummy my screaming child has dropped under the seat.' Horse people do this, too, plastering their trailers with stickers saying 'horses in transit', as if other drivers would be expecting a rhinoceros to suddenly pop its head out of the back."

But they don't go as far as dog people. Dog people buy by the handful stickers saying "Glen of Imaal terriers in transit", "Maremma Sheepdogs in transit", "Komondors in transit". If I found myself behind a car saying "Petis Bassets Griffon Vendeen in transit", I'd probably have to crash into the back out of curiosity. And then there are the "DO IT" stickers. Once upon a time, DO IT stickers were double-entendres. Windsurfers Do It Standing Up, that sort of thing. Dog Do It stickers go like this: "Alaskan Malamutes Do It Without Asking", "Shiba Inus Do It Screaming", "We stare at these open-mouthed, 'Lancashire Heels Do It Lovingly', 'Slush Tans Do It Sweetly', 'Bassetts Do It Better'. Eds leaves a sigh. "I've just realised something about dog people," he says. "Oh, yeah? What's that?" "They're all barking mad."

## Keeping up with the Joneses



Michael Church  
the week on radio

In my year at college there was an earnest lad called Paul Pond, whose passionate desire was to obliterate his public-school past. While the rest of us listened to jazz, he went out and did it, and it was no surprise when he got sent down for persistently failing exams. But he stayed on in town, defiantly playing his mouth-organ in pubs: how we laughed! Next thing we knew, he was wearing red wellies, fronting a band called Manfred Mann, and fighting off the fans. And he'd changed his name to Jones. He went on to win stardom on stage and screen, and then got religion.

But he never broke faith with his real religion, as witness the wonderful three-hour blues-binge to which he treats Jazz FM listeners every Saturday morning.

Last week, in a *Fistful of Dynamite* (Radio 2), he went back to his roots with a history of the harmonica. His claim that this is the most versatile and evocative instrument ever invented was amply borne out; it can do just about anything you want (unless you're Bob Dylan, in which case it does very little, very boringly). Jones and fellow-blowers explained how

to bend notes, how to choke them, and how to vary your wah-wah-wah; while the chromatic instrument (with a lever) permits cleverness, the simple "diatonic" harmonica is what you need for the blues, a sound that goes straight to the heart. That same day, David Owen Norris had given us a crash course in hurdy-gurdy studies. But I know what I like. (Radio 4, Tues) with the aid of hurdy-gurdyist Nigel Eaton. A hurdy-gurdy is a series of strings "bowed" by a hand-cranked wheel, and it sounds like a wheezy orchestra. Eaton and Norris were hazy about the instrument's origin - they should look it up in *Grove*

(from the Orient via Byzantium and Muslim Spain) and their demo tracks went on far too long.

But the documentary immediately preceding this was a disgrace. Imagine *An Onion* was a "sound-portrait" of the glass-towered *bibliothèque de grande vitesse* - Mitterrand's answer to our orange-brick monstrosity in London's Euston Road. Like its British counterpart, the French library has a sound-archive: cue a cack-handed collage of creaky pianos and cracked voices (none of them named). Cue some hashed vox-pops of stunning banality, including (I kid you not) an American academic researching a Renaissance essayist called "Montaggnr". And cue a vacuous commentary which complained that the place was miserable, wet, and windy, so unlike the dear old library in Rue Richelieu, where you could nip out for a coffee, a galette, and - ho ho! - the solace of a local *fil de joie*.

Mon dieu! This was Radio 4's pathetic stab at an intellectual subject: as one might have predicted, the Radio 1 documentary on *Star Wars* was a model of intelligent rigour. I never could take this glorified

kids' film seriously, but Skywalker (Sun) taught me respect for its maker, George Lucas, and gets minions like Richard Dreyfus and Harrison Ford to pursue unquestioningly his bold, original visions. This programme anatomised that mysterious process.

I tried - really tried - to enjoy David Pownall's vision of Salvador Dali giving Winston Churchill painting lessons (*The Curves of Clio*, Radio 3, Tues), and Pownall's yoking of Ezra Pound and Monteverdi (*Pound on Mr Greenhill*, Radio 3, Sun), but was defeated each time by the hysterically mannered tone. Director Cherry Cookson, meanwhile, brought Dickensian fire to Trollope's *Framley Parsonage* (Radio 4, Sunday), and thereby improved it no end.

Listening to Desmond Tutu in *Paths of Inspiration* (Radio 2, Fri) was - well - inspiring. Jan Hislop's *Sentimental Journey* to Hong Kong (Radio 4, Sun) where his father had died when he was 12 - was sadder than either Hislop, or his host Arthur Smith, or the programme's chirpy format, seemed able to cope with. *Robert Hanks returns next week*

## Football crazy, football mad



Jasper Rees  
the week on television

When *Film Night* (C4, Tues) kicked off a few weeks ago, it touted the novelty of a twin-presenter format, designed to allow for informal but informative repartee on the splendidly curvaceous sofa. The novelty has now worn off and the repartee has been seen for what it really is: stilted, botched, and wrong-headed. For this week's re-launch, one of the presenters has been ruthlessly rationalised, along with the weekly two-minute mimetic essay on film style. Good riddance to innovation. Hello again, safety.

So, Janice Forsyth stays on. Never mind that she talks through a tightly drawnstrung aperture as if trying not to dribble. The presenter they've, ahem, devalued is Tommy Udo. You just hope the programme's decision-makers know what they're doing. Udo may have been a television novice but was such a buff that he took his preposterous pseudonym from an arcane *film noir* about a psychotic gangster. If Tommy Udo the ex-presenter is anything like Tommy Udo the character, *Film Night's* executive producer Kirsty Wark might consider laying low for a while. Any movie buff can tell you to beware the chopper chopped.

Udo may reflect on the cruel

irony of his axing in the week *Film Night* ran an item on *American Psycho*, the allegedly satirical slasher novel by Bret Easton Ellis which is to be turned into a film by two women (which apparently makes it all right). Having come to the needless trouble of naming himself after an American psycho, this would surely have been Udo's finest hour.

There were more psychopaths in a fascinating *Panorama* (BBC1, Mon), in which a shrink rounded up all the remorseless killers at Parkhurst and cold-bloodedly shot them. With a video camera. The film made no bones about buying into the gruesome glamour of the callous murderer. It dubbed them "predators", a respectful quotation from the seminal text by

that distinguished and impeccably Austrian explorer of the psychopathic subconscious, Herr Schwarzenegger. The screen kept on multiplying into tiny fragments, as if the film editor, like the interviewees, has a penchant for chopping things up into little bits. There was even a cross-dressing serial killer of the *Silence of the Lambs* variety.

The film delivered the more humdrum truth that, though they had all buried some toxic memory in the sarcophagus of their own psyche, most psychopaths don't wear lace halter-neck tops. They wear football shirts and, more pointedly, the shirts of teams who are going down the plughole. There was one murderer in a West Ham top, another in a Manchester City top. The Dutch psychopath we met who has been apparently cured and released into the community wore the colours of Manchester United - who on *The European Match* - Live! (ITV, Wed), incidentally, finally fulfilled their remit to deliver two hours of primetime entertainment. QED.

The lad on the sofa of *The Mrs Merton Show* (BBC1, Fri) was wearing a Wimbledon shirt. The club are doing well and Vinny Jones has been allowed to mingle in ordinary society, if ordinary's the word

for the company of a young woman who pretends to be a granny and her other guest this week, Boy George. George and Jones was an inspired coupling in a series that has lately tended to rest on its laurels. (By the way, Boy George once said he preferred tea to sex, and the murderer in the lace halter neck said he found it as easy to kill someone as to pick up a cup of tea. What is it with cross-dressers and tea? Perhaps *Panorama* ought to investigate.)

**The South Bank Show** (ITV, Sun) turned in a profile of the Bee Gees that began to deliver more than you initially expected and eventually came up with much less. As the film dwindled into another of *The South Bank Show's* conspicuous failures to grapple with pop, you were treated to a personal tour of not just Barry's Oxfordshire mansion but also Robin's. At least they drew the line at nosing round Maurice's gaff. What this *Hellol*-esque encounter needed was a psychopathic slasher in the cutting room, to perform the kind of radical surgery that must once have been perpetrated on Barry's nether regions. Ruthless knifework is always said to be Melv's greatest ability but, on this evidence, he has been cured.

**DAMIEN HURTS...and his painfully creative struggle** by Kerber

DAMIEN: WHAT'S WITH YOU? YOU'RE SMOKING LIKE A CHIMNEY!

IT'S A CREATIVE THING

I'M 'BEING' THE ROOF OF A HOUSE

Whatever happened to...

## Spies and spying?

1963 Christine Keeler is found cavorting with a Russian naval officer and a member of the British cabinet. James Bond, via detours for liaisons with scantily clad women, is chased by villains with funny foreign accents, and spies, counter spies, and counter, counter spies.

Or was it really like that? Donald MacLean, holed up in some housing estate on the edge of Moscow having fled Britain to escape imprisonment for espionage in 1951 might have a few contradictory words to say on the subject. He wouldn't be able to contribute much now though, passing away on this very day in 1983.

A classical education He came from a Cambridge in the 1930s where spying against your own country wasn't actually taught, but where you wouldn't be called stupid for thinking as much. One of many enticed by the chance to demonstrate initiative

Nice work MacLean was accompanied in his work, as well as in his fleeing, by another star player, Guy Burgess, while old boy Anthony Blunt combined his posts as Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures with that of KGB agent, before establishment contacts helped keep him

in the country in the Sixties after he'd admitted to spying. Others - blunderers and plunderers for the KGB Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were simply executed.

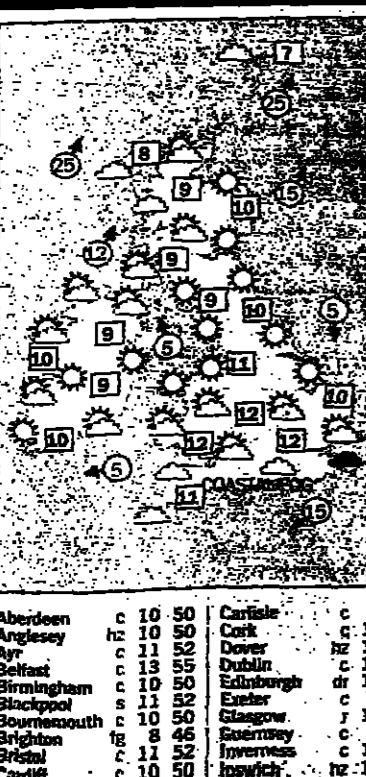
The end, my friend The end of communism has meant less work for the CIA and MI5, and fewer novels from Le Carré. And the end of the Cold War. The IRA have provided an entertaining little sideline, but have recently gone soft, a huge

bomb last September prevented from going off by a £100,000 bribe. And this week another CIA agent admitted to working for the Russians. Still, there's ground for hope in other parts of the world. A mad despot running a major Middle Eastern power (Iraq) and a series of countries - Chechnya for example - that you wouldn't exactly describe as stable present the possibility of good times again for our secret service.

James Aufenast



### WEATHER



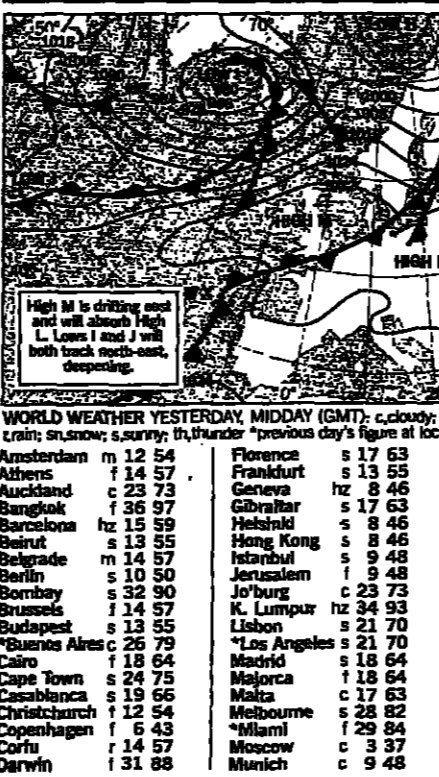
#### General Situation and 5-Day Outlook:

A developing anticyclone will drift east across the British Isles today with Atlantic depressions being held well to the west. Most of Scotland will have sunny spells and a south-westerly breeze. However, the far north and the Northern and Western Isles will be cloudier and windier. Northern Ireland will see sunny spells and a southerly breeze. England and Wales will start misty and southeast England may stay cloudy. Elsewhere, though, it will be fine with most places getting some sunshine and light winds. Sunday promises plenty more fine weather and light winds but cloud in the south-west will drift north through the Irish Sea. Monday and Tuesday will again be mainly fine with sunny spells and a mild southerly breeze. It will, though, be cloudier and windier over northwest Scotland with rain and gusty winds spreading into northern Scotland on Wednesday. Elsewhere, the fine and fairly warm weather will continue.

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Aberdeen	10-15	10-15	10-15
Anglesey	10-15	10-15	10-15
Belfast	10-15	10-15	10-15
Birmingham	10-15	10-15	10-15
Blackpool	10-15	10-15	10-15
Bournemouth	10-15	10-15	10-15
Brighton	10-15	10-15	10-15
Cardiff	10-15	10-15	10-15
Canterbury	10-15	10-15	10-15
Carlisle	10-15	10-15	10-15
Cork	10-15	10-15	10-15
Dover	10-15	10-15	10-15
Edinburgh	10-15	10-15	10-15
Exeter	10-15	10-15	10-15
Glasgow	10-15	10-15	10-15
Gloucester	10-15	10-15	10-15
Harrogate	10-15	10-15	10-15
Inverness	10-15	10-15	10-15
Leeds	10-15	10-15	10-15
London	10-15	10-15	10-15
Liverpool	10-15	10-15	10-15
Manchester	10-15	10-15	10-15
Newcastle	10-15	10-15	10-15
Nottingham	10-15	10-15	10-15
Oxford	10-15	10-15	10-15
Plymouth	10-15	10-15	10-15
Reading	10-15	10-15	10-15
Sheffield	10-15	10-15	10-15
Southampton	10-15	10-15	10-15
Stirling	10-15	10-15	10-15
Swansea	10-15	10-15	10-15
Torquay	10-15	10-15	10-15
Wolverhampton	10-15	10-15	10-15
Wrexham	10-15	10-15	10-15

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
London	10-15	10-15	10-15
Manchester	10-15	10-15	10-15
Birmingham	10-15	10-15	10-15
Cardiff	10-15	10-15	10-15
Belfast	10-15	10-15	10-15
Edinburgh	10-15	10-15	10-15
Glasgow	10-15	10-15	10-15
London	10-15	10-15	10-15
Manchester	10-15	10-15	10-15
Birmingham	10-15	10-15	10-15
Cardiff	10-15	10-15	10-15
Belfast	10-15	10-15	10-15
Edinburgh	10-15	10-15	10-15
Glasgow	10-15	10-15	10-15

### Europe and The World



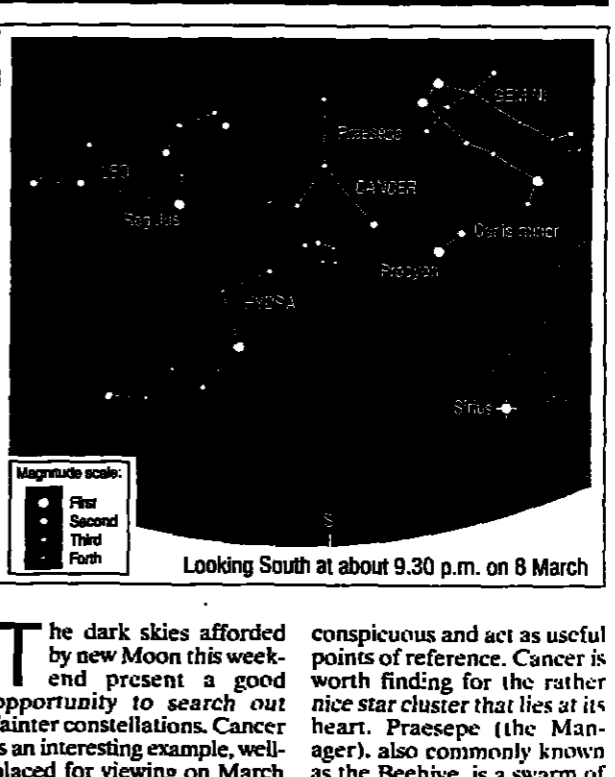
Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
London	10-15	10-15	10-15
Manchester	10-15	10-15	10-15
Birmingham	10-15	10-15	10-15
Cardiff	10-15	10-15	10-15
Belfast	10-15	10-15	10-15
Edinburgh	10-15	10-15	10-15
Glasgow	10-15	10-15	10-15
London	10-15	10-15	10-15
Manchester	10-15	10-15	10-15
Birmingham	10-15	10-15	10-15
Cardiff	10-15	10-15	10-15
Belfast	10-15	10-15	10-15
Edinburgh	10-15	10-15	10-15
Glasgow	10-15	10-15	10-15

### AA Roadwatch

London. A306 Hammer Smith Bridge. Closed both ways to general traffic for structural works. Expect congestion on both sides of the river. M1 J2 Hendon area. Major roadworks at Five Ways Corner, with no access to or from the A1 Great North Way. Beisil, M5 J18-19. Contrailow in operation across the Avonmouth Bridge with a 50mph speed limit. Regular rush-hour delays. West Midlands. A34. Major roadworks on Stafford Road, Spinkhill. No entry into Highgate Road. Regular delays expected. M1 West Yorkshire. J47 Leeds (M62/A63 Holbeck). Long-term roadworks with speed limits down to 30mph. Delays on the M1, M62 and Dewsbury Road. City of Edinburgh. M8 J2. Major roadworks, with lane closures on the roundabout at J2 (Newbridge Spur). Greater Manchester. M63 J11-12. Maintenance work between J11 (Cheadle) and J12 (Stockport) with narrow lanes each way and a 50mph speed limit.

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
London	10-15	10-15	10-15
Manchester	10-15	10-15	10-15
Birmingham	10-15	10-15	10-15
Cardiff	10-15	10-15	10-15
Belfast	10-15	10-15	10-15
Edinburgh	10-15	10-15	10-15
Glasgow	10-15	10-15	10-15
London	10-15	10-15	10-15
Manchester	10-15	10-15	10-15
Birmingham	10-15	10-15	10-15
Cardiff	10-15	10-15	10-15
Belfast	10-15	10-15	10-15
Edinburgh	10-15	10-15	10-15
Glasgow	10-15	10-15	10-15

### The Sky at Night



The dark skies afforded by new Moon this week-end present a good opportunity to search out fainter constellations. Cancer is an interesting example, well-placed for viewing on March evenings. Though its name is familiar as a zodiacal constellation, the Crab is rather dim and nondescript. Its brightest star is only magnitude three and a half. However, it lies squarely between Leo and Gemini, which are much more

conspicuous and act as useful points of reference. Cancer is worth finding for the rather nice star cluster that lies at its heart. Praesepe (the Manger), also commonly known as the Beehive, is a swarm of about 200 stars located about 500 light years away from us. In a dark sky, it is just about visible to the naked eye and is a good target for observing with binoculars.

James Aufenast



ITV has the rights to this season's Formula One season and they want to make sure you know it. Network Centre's biggest coup was in persuading Murray Walker to bring his distinctive hairpin commentary style over to them, but not, of course, the old Fleetwood Mac theme tune. Jamiroquai do the honours instead. It's unlikely, though, that world champion Damon Hill (above) and his new Arrows team will be winning any honours.

**ANGLIA**  
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (11137). 1.05 Anglia News and Weather (81738088). 7.15pm Carry On Screaming (36527392). 4.20 Cartoons (340408). 5.05 - 5.20pm Anglia News, Sports and Weather (1689601).

**CENTRAL**  
As London except: 12.30pm Premier (11137). 1.05 Central News and Weather (81738088). 2.40 Movies, Games and Videos (5112243). 3.40 Sportsman (3580338). 4.20pm Carry On Screaming (36527392). 5.05 Central News and Weather (9874311). 5.10 - 5.15pm Central Match - Goals Extra (9866392).

**HTV WALES**  
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (11137). 1.05 HTV Wales News and Weather (81738088). 2.40 Baywatch (3047972). 3.30 World of Wonder (5349934). 3.50 Airwork (81738088). 5.05 - 5.20pm HTV Wales News and Sports Results (1636601).

**HTV West**  
As London except: 1.05pm HTV West News and Weather (81738088). 2.40 Sportsweek (1914040). 3.15 Airwork (4028446). 4.10 The List (1774727). 5.05 - 5.20pm HTV West News, Sports Results and Weather (1689601).

**MERIDIAN**  
As London except: 12.30pm Pier Pressure (11137). 1.05 Meridian News and Weather (81738088). 2.40 Film: Carry On Screaming (36527392). 4.20 Movies, Games and Videos (1340408). 5.05 - 5.15pm Meridian News and Weather (3658885).

**WESTCOUNTRY**  
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (11137). 1.05 Westcountry News (81738088). 2.40 Cartoon (2714653). 2.50 Airwalk (8526243). 3.50 seafest Day (8178359). 5.05 - 5.15pm Westcountry News (3658885).

**YORKSHIRE**  
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (11137). 1.05 Yorkshire News and Weather (81738088). 2.40 Racing Show (8503939). 3.40 Cartoon (9812868). 3.50 Baywatch (8788359). 5.05 Calendar News and Weather (9874311). 5.10 - 5.15pm Scoreline (9866392).

**Channel 3 North East**  
As Yorkshire except: 1.05pm North East News and Weather (81738088). 5.05 North East News and Weather (9874311). 5.10 - 5.15pm Full Time (9866392).

**SAC**  
As SAC except: 10.00am Games with Mr Cooper (5249). 10.30 Non Gamesmaster (21885). 12.00 Film: Moviekick (82137). 2.10 Film: The Mark of Zorro\* (76290593). 2.15 Collectors' Lot (3995756). 3.40 Traveling (8885). 7.00 Newyddion a Chwaraeon (5605574). 7.15 Noson O'r Oesoedd (3628620). 9.15 Gangi (271381). 9.50 Last Chance Lottery (2129311). 10.55 The Show (5058779). 12.00 Brass Eye (91809). 12.30 Fortean TV (7230). 1.15 The Office (4046731). 4.45 - 5.15pm The Best Sports Show (7056873).

6.000 Loses Money (925622605). 9.00  
Golf, David Ryder Open (9216977).  
11.00 Inside the PGA Senior Tour  
(323975750). 11.30-12.00midnight  
Survival of the Fittest (30075).

**LIVE TV**

6.00am Pin Money 6.30 Fashion  
7.00 Sport 7.30 Sport 8.00 Sport  
8.30 9.00 9.30 Looking for Love  
Pit Squad 9.00 Revelations 9.30  
Fashion 10.00 Agency 10.30 Blind  
10.45 Pet Squad 11.00 Trial TV  
11.30 Fate and Fortune 12.00 Why  
12.30 1.00 1.30 2.00 2.30 3.00  
Fashion 2.30 Agency 3.00 Fate and  
Fortune 3.30 Pin Money 4.00 La  
ing for Love 4.30 Pin Money 4.50  
Agency 5.30 Blind 5.45 Pet Squad  
6.00 6.30 7.00 7.30 8.00 8.30  
Money 7.30 Sport 9.00 Pin  
to 9.00 Handy Hunches. 9.30 9.00  
Bottom Line 9.30 Eva's Severities  
Pon Show 10.00 Topless Darts. 10.00  
10.30 Stand-Up 11.00 Topless  
11.30 12.00 12.30 1.00 1.30 2.00  
11.55 Exotic Erotica 12.30 Kiss  
1.30 Shopping 2.00 Ser 2.30 Sto  
Up 3.00 Revelations 3.30 Why F

